

**Testimony of Cole Higlin
North Dakota Recreation & Park Association
To House Political Subdivisions
In Support to HB 1198
Friday, January 24, 2025**

Chairman Longmuir and members of the Committee, my name is Cole Higlin, and I am the public policy chair of the North Dakota Recreation & Park Association (NDRPA). We represent more than 900 members, primarily park districts, and work to advance parks, recreation and conservation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota.

On behalf of North Dakota's park districts, I express support for House Bill 1198 which provides clarity as to how park districts are allowed to engage in cooperative purchasing. My understanding is that an amendment is going to be brought forward to provide further clarity to the language, allowing park districts to participate in cooperative purchasing contracts with OMB, cooperative purchasing contracts with another state, and cooperative purchases pursuant to a joint powers agreement.

Cooperative purchasing allows political subdivisions to pool buying power, securing competitive prices and favorable terms. This bill would allow park districts to leverage this model, unlocking cost savings that can be reinvested in our facilities, programs and services for the communities we serve. By providing clarity to how park districts can participate in cooperative purchasing, the bill would help ensure efficiency and transparency in the process, all while maintaining compliance with existing rules and regulations.

We ask the committee to support this bill as an important step toward enhancing the effectiveness of park districts statewide. Thank you for the opportunity to express our support.