

Date: January 8, 2025

4B 1052
~~1255~~ ALBRECHT
01/10/25

To: North Dakota Legislative Transportation Committee

From: Winery Association of North Dakota (WAND)

- Robert Grosz, (dakotavineswinery@gmail.com) President WAND and Co-Owner Dakota Vines Vineyard and Winery
- Randy Albrecht (ralbre@live.com), Treasure WAND and Owner Wolf Creek Winery
- Lisa Cook (4ewinery@gmail.com) Secretary WAND and Co-Owner 4e Winery

Subject: Written Testimony - Opposition to Proposed Changes to HB 1052

On behalf of the Winery Association of North Dakota, we would like to voice our opposition to the proposed changes to HB 1052. These amendments, particularly the removal of language recognizing businesses within city limits and the restriction of tourist-oriented directional signs to rural highways, could have serious consequences for rural agricultural businesses and tourism attractions across the state.

Concerns with Changes to Section 39-13-09 (1b)

Impact on Rural Agricultural Businesses and Tourism Attractions:

Removing the phrase “within the city limits in which the business is located” from Section 39-13-09 (1b) risks excluding businesses within city limits that rely heavily on rural agricultural and tourism activities. This exclusion disrupts the interconnected tourism system, where both rural and city-based rural agricultural businesses and tourism attractions play a role in attracting visitors.

- **Reduced Incentive for Investment: Creating Inequity: Fragmenting Tourism Ecosystems:**

Concerns with Changes to Section 39-13-09 (4)

Loss of Visibility for Tourist Attractions:

Restricting tourist-oriented directional signs to rural highways reduces the visibility of attractions for travelers on state and local roads. Many visitors rely on signage to discover destinations, especially in unfamiliar areas.

- **Economic Harm to Local Businesses: Broader Impact on Local Economies:**

Recommendations

To support the growth of rural agricultural businesses and tourism in North Dakota, we urge the legislature to:

1. **Retain the original language in Section 39-13-09 (1b):** Ensure rural agricultural businesses and tourism attractions within city limits remain eligible for support.
2. **Avoid limiting tourist-oriented directional signs to rural highways:** Ensuring visibility for rural agricultural businesses and tourism attractions on all roadways.

These steps are essential for fostering a strong and equitable tourism ecosystem that benefits all communities and businesses across the state.

Thank you for considering these concerns. We look forward to working together to support the continued success of North Dakota's rural agricultural businesses and tourism industry.