

Date: January 20, 2025

Subject: Opposition to House Bill 1038

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my opposition to House Bill 1038. This bill proposes significant resource allocations to address potential threats that have not been clearly identified or substantiated. Such an approach is not a prudent use of taxpayer dollars and does not align with the priorities of the people of North Dakota.

Misallocation of Resources

Implementing this bill would require extensive resources to replace or regulate components that have yet to be proven problematic. Without concrete evidence of a specific threat or deficiency in the current system, this expenditure represents a mismanagement of funds. Taxpayer dollars should not be diverted to initiatives that lack clear justification, especially when other critical issues demand attention.

Past Mismanagement

There is a history of mismanagement in related areas, which raises concerns about the effectiveness of this bill. Unresolved issues have eroded public trust, making it difficult to support additional allocations for initiatives that may fail to deliver tangible benefits to the state.

Federal Responsibility and the NDAA

While this bill aligns with measures under the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which imposes strict controls on technology—particularly drones and components sourced from countries like China or Russia—the financial burden associated with these requirements should fall on the federal government. National security is a critical concern, but it is unfair to place the financial responsibility for compliance on the people of North Dakota. The costs of replacing or regulating these components should not be absorbed by state governments or taxpayers. It is the responsibility of the federal government to provide the necessary funding or resources to ensure compliance without burdening local economies or essential services.

Drone Lifecycle and Compliance Timeline

Considering the 1-3 year lifespan of drones, I believe we will be fully compliant with NDAA requirements within the next five years. All new drone purchases will align with these standards, and this timeline provides a sufficient and reasonable approach to ensure compliance without unnecessary expenditures.

Recommendation for a Study

Rather than moving forward with House Bill 1038, I recommend commissioning a comprehensive study to evaluate its necessity at this time. A thorough investigation would provide the data necessary to make informed decisions without prematurely committing valuable resources.

Conclusion

In light of these concerns, I urge you to reconsider House Bill 1038 and prioritize initiatives that

directly benefit the people of North Dakota. Let us focus on fiscal responsibility and the pressing needs of our communities, rather than pursuing uncertain and costly regulatory changes. Additionally, the federal government must assume responsibility for the financial demands of NDAA compliance to ensure that the burden does not unfairly fall on our state's taxpayers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Breann Demarais