

January 28, 2025

**RE: Testimony to Senate Finance and Taxation Committee on SB 2323 to create and enact a new section to chapter 57-51 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to an energy impact grant fund;**

Chairman Weber and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Shawn Dobberstein. I am the Executive Director of the Municipal Airport Authority of the City of Fargo. On behalf of the Municipal Airport Authority, I respectfully offer testimony in support of SB 2323.

We understand several cities in North Dakota have taken on debt to meet the needs of their rapidly growing city. New and expanding businesses, along with housing developments, require significant investments in infrastructure to handle the growth. The infrastructure includes water, sanitary and storm sewer, roads, and airports. This is especially true for hub cities in Western North Dakota that expanded at a rapid pace due to the unprecedented growth in the energy industry.

SB 2323 will aid hub cities that have been impacted by this rapid growth. This bill provides impact grants to assist the hub cities with reducing their debt. This bill could allow airports to pay down their debt which will free up airport revenues to complete other critical projects that serve the traveling public and the aviation industry in North Dakota.

We appreciate the reduction in the SIF allocation from \$400 million to \$320 million. This will hold the buckets below that allocation in relatively the same position.

Your support of SB 2323 will provide needed financial assistance to impacted communities that will allow each to reduce their respective debt burden.

We respectfully request that the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee unanimously support the passage of SB 2323.