



Testimony of Laura Lacher
Economic Development Association of North Dakota
In Support of SB 2154
January 20, 2025

Chair Barta and members of the Senate Industry and Business Committee:

The Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND) represents more than 80 state economic development organizations on the front line of economic development efforts throughout North Dakota. The primary purpose of the organization is to promote the creation of new wealth throughout North Dakota to develop more vibrant communities and improve quality of life.

Tourism plays a vital role in North Dakota's economy and aligns with the principles of primary sector business by creating new wealth through out-of-state visitors and local spending. These activities generate external dollars for our communities, drive employment, and support secondary economic benefit such as the growth of local businesses. Expanding the definition of primary sector business to include tourism strengthens our state's economic diversity and provides a sustainable revenue source that compliments traditional industries.

Recognizing tourism as a primary sector business also showcases North Dakota as a premier destination, enhancing its profile and attracting visitors and talent to support economic growth. Tourism often thrives in rural areas, bringing equitable development to underserved communities while creating jobs and improving infrastructure. This aligns seamlessly with EDND's legislative priorities, including workforce development, infrastructure investment, and community enhancement.

SB 2154 is a strategic update to North Dakota's economic framework, unlocking significant growth and resilience while supporting the vitality of our communities. On behalf of EDND, thank you for your consideration and we support a Do Pass on SB 2154.