

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Andrea Pfennig, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs for the Greater North Dakota Chamber. GNDC is North Dakota's largest statewide business advocacy organization, with membership represented by small and large businesses, local chambers, and trade and industry associations across the state. We stand in **opposition** of Senate Bill 2321.

Our members support a business-friendly regulatory environment that is consistent, efficient, cost-effective and promotes investment in infrastructure.

While private negotiations with landowners are the preferred method for acquiring necessary easements or property rights for public projects, we recognize that mechanisms such as amalgamation and eminent domain, when used appropriately, are essential to ensure the continued development of North Dakota's infrastructure and economy.

By allowing the court to award expert witness costs in condemnation proceedings, regardless of the outcome, we risk increased costs that will ultimately be paid for by the public.

We believe the existing framework for eminent domain is already balanced, providing protections for landowners while allowing for necessary development. The proposed changes could disrupt that balance by shifting too much risk and cost onto the public entities responsible for providing essential infrastructure, services, and utilities. These changes could ultimately harm the very individuals and communities the bill intends to protect by reducing the ability to undertake critical development projects in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Smart approaches to infrastructure are vital to ensure that North Dakota has the infrastructure necessary to support and grow a thriving economy. We urge you to oppose SB 2321.

