



North Dakota House of Representatives

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COMMITTEES:

Industry, Business and Labor
Government and Veterans Affairs

Madam Chair Larson, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Landon Bahl, and I reside in Grand Forks, and have the privilege of serving the great citizens of District 17 in the house of representatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2376, a bill that I consider a forward-thinking bill. As a hospitality industry professional and a co-sponsor of this bill, I strongly believe in the positive economic and social impacts this development will bring to our state, and particularly the city of Grand Forks.

The hospitality industry is a driving force behind economic growth, job creation, and community development. A casino of this scale would bring significant investment to the area, providing well-paying jobs, increased tourism, and a strengthened local economy. It would also create opportunities for small businesses, from restaurants and hotels to entertainment venues and retail establishments, all of which would benefit from the increased traffic and demand for services.

Furthermore, this legislation aligns with principles of economic self-determination for tribal nations. By allowing the tribe to develop this casino, we are recognizing their right to engage in commerce and contribute meaningfully to the economic fabric of North Dakota. Many states have seen the benefits of similar developments, where tribal casinos have led to substantial regional economic stimulation without adverse impacts to existing industries. We share often we are one of the friendliest states to do business in for companies outside of our state, I would ask the question, "Why don't we extend the same opportunities for our Native American citizens to build their businesses?"

Grand Forks is uniquely positioned to benefit from such an establishment. The city's proximity to a major university, a strong regional transportation network, and a diverse business community makes it an ideal location for a gaming and entertainment destination. This project would attract visitors from across the state and beyond, further bolstering Grand Forks' reputation as a regional hub for business, tourism, and entertainment.

Opponents may express concerns about competition with existing gaming and hospitality operations, but history has shown that a well-managed and strategically located casino can complement, rather than diminish, the success of other entertainment and hospitality businesses. Increased tourism, higher occupancy rates in local hotels, and a boost in ancillary spending all contribute to a stronger, more resilient economy.

In closing, I urge the committee to support this bill and recognize the long-term benefits it will bring to our state. This is not just about economic opportunities, it is about fairness, progress, and ensuring that North Dakota remains competitive and forward-looking in its approach to economic development. Madam Chair & Members of the Committee, thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to stand for any questions.

Regards,
Landon