

Chairman Patten, members of the committee, on behalf of the Energy & Environmental Research Center we appreciate this opportunity to offer comments on HB 1025. As a leading developer of cleaner, more efficient energy and environmental technologies, the EERC supports an all-of-the-above approach to developing energy resources. Over the past several years the EERC has been involved with numerous projects to reduce carbon emissions while ensuring reliability, such as carbon capture technology for fossil-fuel electric generation as well as new and emerging fuels such as hydrogen, and options for energy storage.

At the direction of the legislature in 2023, and in conjunction with the Lignite Energy Council, the EERC just completed a study on a lignite plant of the future. That study explored regulatory, financial, technological, and other issues related to construction of a new, lignite-fired power facility in North Dakota. This legislation would implement a similar review for advanced nuclear. As the state of North Dakota explores options for future electric generation - particularly as we look at forecasts for increasing electric load - it is important to fully understand the feasibility, costs, impacts, and the role that nuclear might play in the regional electric grid and overall North Dakota energy industry.

As this committee has heard previously, there is language currently within the century code that limits the ability of the State Energy Research Center, and by association the EERC, to conduct research on nuclear energy. That issue is addressed through Senate Bill 2159, which received a unanimous “Do Pass” from this committee, overwhelming support by the full Senate, and is awaiting consideration by the House. Thank you for your support of that legislation which would allow the EERC to lend its expertise to this study.

We appreciate the legislature’s ongoing support of energy innovation and pursuing solutions to environmental challenges while growing our energy sector and its contributions to the state. Thank you again for this opportunity to provide comment.