



Testimony in Support of North Dakota Senate Bill 2360

Johanna Ostrum, Gradient Geothermal

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Chair Patton, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2360. My name is Johanna Ostrum, and I am the Chief Operating Officer of Gradient Geothermal, a company dedicated to advancing geothermal energy development in North Dakota and beyond. I strongly support this bill, which calls for a legislative management study of geothermal energy in the state.

North Dakota has long been a leader in energy production, leveraging its abundant natural resources to drive economic growth and energy security. As the energy landscape evolves, it is critical to explore all viable options for maintaining North Dakota's leadership role while ensuring long-term sustainability and economic resilience. Geothermal energy represents a significant opportunity to diversify the state's energy portfolio, create new job opportunities, and provide a reliable, emissions-free power source that complements existing industries.

A legislative study of geothermal energy is a necessary first step toward unlocking this potential. While North Dakota's subsurface resources are well-mapped for oil and gas production, additional research is needed to assess the feasibility and best practices for harnessing geothermal energy within the state. A comprehensive study would provide valuable insights into the state's geothermal potential, regulatory framework, and economic benefits, positioning North Dakota as a leader in an emerging energy sector.

My company, Gradient Geothermal, is actively deploying geothermal technology in oil and gas fields, demonstrating how existing infrastructure can be harnessed to generate geothermal energy that also provides value for oil and gas operators.

Geothermal energy is produced every day in this state from oil and gas wells. This heat is simply radiated into the atmosphere right now. Our work in North Dakota, with Enerplus and Chord Energy and partially funded by a Clean Sustainable Energy Authority Grant, has shown that geothermal co-production from oil and gas wells is not just theoretical—it is practical, cost-effective, and can be easily integrated into horizontal well development. A legislative study would help identify ways to support such initiatives and encourage investment in geothermal projects.

Repurposing idle or shut-in oil and gas wells for geothermal energy provides a second life for these existing assets, transforming them into productive energy sources instead of liabilities. Many wells that are no longer viable for oil and gas production still have the necessary subsurface heat to generate geothermal power. This approach reduces the environmental impact associated with well abandonment and creates a new revenue stream for well owners, while maximizing the value of previous energy investments.

In addition to economic benefits, geothermal energy development aligns with North Dakota's commitment to energy innovation and responsible resource management. By studying geothermal



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potential, the state can proactively develop policies that foster growth, attract industry investment, and ensure that North Dakota remains at the forefront of energy leadership.

I urge the committee to support Senate Bill 2360 and recognize the importance of this study in shaping the future of North Dakota's energy landscape. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

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