

March 6, 2025

TO: North Dakota Senate State and Local Government Committee

FR: Daniel J. Daly, Geologist/Research Manager (Retired), Grand Forks ND

RE: Statement in Opposition to HB 1255

I am writing to express opposition to HB 1255. Why? Because foundational funding from the state of North Dakota helps ensure that Prairie Public Broadcasting (PPB) continues to have the proper equipment, skilled staff, expertise, and broadcast license and capabilities to provide North Dakota viewers with a variety of quality programming. At the same time, North Dakota's support provides the funds for the staff, facilities, and expertise to produce professional programming and related products in PPB's North Dakota facilities. The capability enabled by foundational funding allows PPB to offer cost share when responding to federal-funding opportunities including those for education or original programming. The foundational funding has also been fundamental in allowing PPB to build and maintain a reputation for excellence and trustworthiness. When people sit down to be interviewed by PPB they know that their story will be heard and fairly portrayed and that the product will be high quality.

I speak from first-hand experience. During my time as a Geologist/Research Manager at the Energy & Environmental Research Center at the University of North Dakota I led a team that worked with PPB to produce more than a dozen original television documentaries and attendant products focused on demonstrating the connections between energy, the environment, human activities, and quality of life. These efforts occurred under a mix of dedicated and multi-year contracts awarded by federal agencies like the US Department of Energy and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. These were competitive awards and PPB won a place in these projects through their professionalism, facilities, and their ability to provide cost-share. Over the course of these contracts PPB worked with many regional project partners including the Lignite Energy Council, the ND Petroleum Council, and the ND Oil and Gas Commission. PPB had a central role in creating digital products given to 100s of educators through periodic PPB teacher education workshops and the annual teacher education workshops of the Lignite Energy Council. PPB's efforts resulted in product awards and garnered consistently positive responses from our funders, and our public and private sector partners. These responses speak to the value that PPB provided – value supported by North Dakota's ongoing foundational investment in PPB.

With much of the media landscape today characterized by “gotcha” moments and “read me” headlines I respectfully ask the members of the committee to vote “No” on HB 1255 to help ensure that PPB can continue to offer North Dakota's audiences and stakeholders a clear alternative.