

January 9, 2025

Senate State and Local Government Committee  
Honorable Kristen Roers, Chair  
North Dakota State Capitol, Judicial Wing #216

RE: SB 2048 – Support Testimony presented by Corey Mock, Chief Information Officer

Madam Chair and Members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee –

Senate Bill 2048 comes to you as an agency housekeeping bill, intending to modernize how we create and maintain our Statewide IT Plan. NDIT supports a change from the current process outlined in NDCC § 54-59-11, but we are kicking off your committee workload during the 69<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly with a less-than-conventional request: take no action on SB 2048 without consideration of amendments currently under development.

It's important to understand “how we got to now” when determining the best course of action when change is warranted.

Title and section 54-59 relates specifically to North Dakota Information Technology (originally known as North Dakota’s Information Technology Department, or ITD). Our agency was established with the passage of this section during the 1999 legislative session, following a broader study on information services, communications, and network planning. 54-59-11 mandated that NDIT approve agency IT plans and create a statewide IT plan with input from all public entities using the statewide network, including our university system.

*(It seems appropriate to describe our agency's early years as our beta testing period.)*

There were many tweaks to various sections of 54-59 over the next decade, with 6 amendments to 54-59-11 alone.

## **54-59-11 Summary of Changes from 1999-Present**

- 1999** Title and section created; each executive agency submits IT plan for approval by January 15<sup>th</sup> of even numbered years. Political subdivision users, judicial branch, and legislative branch also required to submit their plans for inclusion by January 15<sup>th</sup> of even numbered years.
- 2001** Reporting deadline moved from January to March 15<sup>th</sup> of even numbered years; political subdivision users no longer required to submit plans to NDIT.
- 2003** Reporting deadline moved from March to July 15<sup>th</sup> of even numbered years.
- 2007** Higher education IT structure codified; separate higher education IT plan created by the state board of higher education in coordination with NDIT. NDUS institutions no longer required to be included in NDIT's Statewide IT plan.
- 2007** Agency plans are now accepted, but no longer approved, by NDIT. Asset management plan is a required component; itemized additions to the plan include budget and actual cost analysis of projects, cost-benefit analysis of completed projects, information about the IT plan creation and review process, description of benefits to the state resulting from investments in IT.
- 2009** Reporting deadline moved from July to August 15<sup>th</sup> of even numbered years; CIO allowed to grant deadline extensions as needed; all itemized inclusions added in SB 2037 (2007 session) were removed, as was the requirement that agency budgets must align with their submitted IT plan. (Final product of this legislation is 54-59-11 in our current form.)

Information technology is more than computers, cables, wires, and blue screen errors. Reliable technology allows each agency to provide exceptional service and improve the lives of North Dakotans. Communication, cooperation, and perpetual planning allow NDIT to meet technological needs and expectations of all our agency clients.

54-59-11 has always been well-intentioned. Biennial conversations around this point-in-time report spark important dialogue between agencies and lawmakers. But a static IT plan is inadequate in today's dynamic world.

We've steadily adapted and moved away from old planning methods. In 2022, NDIT implemented a first iteration of our IT performance dashboard. We've retired the concept of quarterly status reports and implemented an agile "scrum" process – breaking large projects into short "sprints." Our teams and agency partners can review, test, and assess more frequently, allowing us to adapt quickly and remain accountable to our clients.

IT project agility would be impossible if restricted to a 2-year-old playbook. SB 2048 seeks to establish an updated practice that reflects regular communication and consultation with all agency partners. Our statewide IT plan is a living document and should provide meaningful information to all users and stakeholders.

In consultation with Governor Kelly Armstrong's office and other statewide agencies, we see this as an opportunity to bring agencies together and meet their ever-changing needs. Service and shared priorities should drive our technology initiatives, not the other way around. With support from your committee and the opportunity to revisit 54-59-11 with a broader lens, we believe our service-first approach will be the standard operating procedure going forward.