



P.O. Box 2747
Fargo, ND 58108

January 31, 2025

Testimony SB 2256-North Dakota Senate Workforce Senator Wobbema, Chairman and Members of the Committee

My name is Tony Grindberg, State Director for Xcel Energy and I am honored to provide testimony today on behalf of the NDSU Research & Technology Park (RTP). ***The RTP has created a new agile and focused business model emphasizing the productization of intelligent autonomous mobile equipment.*** Xcel Energy strongly supports Senate Bill 2256 as a critical step toward advancing the RTP and bolstering North Dakota's leadership in emerging technologies that are then converted into products for the benefit of the commercial market and military. Established 25 years ago, the RTP has a longstanding history of fostering innovation, with Xcel Energy as the first company to financially support the technology incubator. SB 2256 will leverage this history and facilitate the following key objectives:

Focus on Autonomous Technology: The RTP envisions a future centered on robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), and autonomous systems, particularly intelligent mobile equipment. This initiative will position North Dakota at the forefront of technological innovation and leadership in autonomy with numerous economic benefits.

Translating Discovery into Societal Benefit: The RTP serves as a vital bridge between groundbreaking research and real-world applications. By fostering an environment where innovative ideas are transformed into tangible societal benefits, we ensure that North Dakota remains competitive in the ever-evolving global landscape.

Economic, Security, and Workforce Benefits: The RTP contributes significantly to North Dakota's economy by attracting high-tech industries and fostering manufacturing productivity. Additionally, these initiatives help address critical workforce skill gaps, ensuring that North Dakotans are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow.

Advancing North Dakota's Autonomy Leadership: With its strong emphasis on intelligent autonomous mobile equipment, the RTP solidifies North Dakota's position as a leader in this transformative field. Our efforts align with national priorities in autonomy, reinforcing our state's reputation as an innovation hub.

Transformative Potential and Job Creation: The RTP initiative has the power to create substantial economic impact and generate numerous high-quality jobs.

In conclusion, supporting SB 2256 is an investment in North Dakota's future. The RTP is committed to fostering technological innovation, driving economic growth, and solving industry problems. We urge the committee to advance this legislation to ensure that North Dakota remains a leader in the rapidly evolving landscape of autonomous technology and product development.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

Sincerely,

Tony Grindberg

Xcel Energy