



Testimony by Holly L. Anderson
In Support of SB2256 Funding for the North Dakota State University Research Technology Park Fund
to the North Dakota Senate Workforce Development Committee
January 31, 2025

Esteemed Chair and members of the Workforce Development Committee:

I am testifying in SUPPORT of SB2256.

Since 2014, Elinor Coatings has been headquartered at the NDSU Research and Technology Park (RTP) in Fargo. As a business owner who has received critical support and benefited from the existence and programming of the RTP, **I urge you to fund this important component of our state's rapid growth in innovative and commercially-viable robotic and AI-powered technologies, companies and workforce.**

In 2014, Elinor had two co-founders sharing one office in the Business Incubator of the RTP and an incredible mountain of financial, technical, regulatory, and workforce challenges ahead of us in order to successfully commercialize and grow a new company based on world-class, but home-grown, coatings research happening at NDSU.

Over the past 12 years, our tiny company in the back hallway of the RTP grew to 30 full-time, highly educated employees working in five laboratories on multiple multi-year Department of Defense research contracts to develop anti-corrosion coatings for air and ground vehicles for the Air Force and Army. We recently launched the Aurora Center for Extreme Weather Materials to expand our capabilities in North Dakota for extreme weather testing, manufacturing and coatings application.

In addition to year-over-year workforce growth, we hire up to 10 engineering, chemistry, polymer and computer science interns each year and work with our state's universities to access subject matter experts, advanced laboratory testing, and promising technologies ready for commercialization.

We have accomplished this growth as tenants of the RTP, where we remain. We support the expansion of the RTP into becoming a hub for advanced robotics, artificial intelligence applied research and a bridge between academia, industry, and the Department of Defense. Our advanced materials laboratory can greatly benefit and collaborate with robotics and AI to create high throughput formulation and materials development and create solutions for our customers related to specialty manufacturing and autonomous coatings application and evaluation.

The RTP can be an even more valuable technology hub and accelerator, but unless it is funded for rapid expansion, Elinor will likely outgrow the space and capabilities, and this exciting opportunity to foster robotics and AI it is offering may not have the rocket fuel it needs to succeed.

Please support business owners like me and all future innovators by funding a vision for North Dakota that embraces the most patriotic of actions: celebrating research and technology through a place that encourages applied mathematicians, scientists and engineers to create a future that is secure, resilient, capable and offers workforce opportunities for the next generation of innovative North Dakotans to thrive.

Respectfully submitted,
Holly Anderson, CEO
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