



Joint Letter of Support – SB 2256

Friday, January 31, 2025

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

On behalf of the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber) and the Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation (GFMEDC), we respectfully offer testimony in support of House Bill 2256.

The North Dakota State University Research and Tech Park (RTP) is a vital component to North Dakota's research and innovation ecosystem – building strategic partnerships, developing critical industries, and diversifying our state's economy. With more than 50 years of combined experience as CEOs of business development organizations across six states, this is the most industry-aligned and focused initiative we've witnessed of a higher education institution developing programming and relationships through the lens of business and economic development.

The RTP has outlined a strategic plan and business model that is focused on the future, targeting emerging industries, like robotics, artificial intelligence, and autonomous systems. Under this direction, the RTP has expanded existing relationships and forged new, impactful relationships with state entities, and globally recognized organizations such as the National Robotics Engineering Center at Carnegie Mellon University. This industry-driven strategy, accompanied by meaningful relationships, synergistically aligns with regional and statewide economic development strategies that support the enhancement of critical industry sectors, such as AgTech, BioSciences, Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, Autonomous Systems.

With the state's investment, the RTP will become a vital hub for emerging technology – fostering an environment that transforms innovative ideas into commercialized products. These activities will further define North Dakota as an international leader in research and technology – attracting new companies and investments to the state. In fact, the third-party economic impact analysis conducted on behalf of this initiative provides significant justification for the investment being requested - \$300 million in additional State GDP and nearly \$1 billion of in-state business sales just in the first decade.

Moreover, the investment in the North Dakota State University Research and Tech Park represents a transformative opportunity for our state. This innovative solution creates dynamic pathways for economic growth, that will significantly bolster key industries and develop the next generation of talent. We urge this committee to support the Senate Bill 2256 and give it a DO PASS recommendation, ensuring North Dakota capitalizes on this unique opportunity to position the state as a leader in emerging technology.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Full".

Shannon Full
President and CEO
FMWF Chamber

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Raso".

Joe Raso
President and CEO
GFMEDC