



**Testimony of Connie Ova, CEO
Jamestown/Stutsman County Development Corporation
SB2018
March 2, 2021**

Chairman Delzer and members of the House Appropriates Committee, I'm Connie Ova, CEO of the Jamestown/Stutsman Development Corporation (JSDC). I have served in this capacity since 2003. The Jamestown/Stutsman Development Corporation is dedicated to area economic development growth and diversification. JSDC was formally organized in 1991 to develop employment to improve business conditions and advance the interests of the City of Jamestown and Stutsman County, North Dakota by implementing and sustaining an organized effort to attract new businesses and industry, support existing businesses and industry, and encourage new business starts. Jamestown/Stutsman Development Corporation's focus is primary sector job creation.

My testimony is in support of SB 2018. The ND Department of Commerce is a premier partner that provides valuable tools, programs, and resources for the economic developers across our state. While JSDC is supportive of the continuation of all Department of Commerce programs, I want to take opportunity to specifically express our support for a few key programs in this bill.

The North Dakota Small Business Development Centers (NDSBDC) help North Dakotans to start, manage, and grow their businesses. The NDSBDC is a statewide network supporting entrepreneurs and business owners through no-cost, confidential consulting, and business education. Their regional expertise is easily accessible across more than a dozen locations. The ND Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is funded primarily from the Partner Programs line, however, some of their funding comes from the discretionary line, which has been reduced by the Senate. Cuts to either line, will influence their operations, if that cut gets passed on to them. Our goal (and ask) is to provide increased funding.

An integral program aligned with the SBDC is the North Dakota Procurement Technical Assistance Center (ND PTAC). The ND PTAC program is 100% funded from the discretionary line. Their team assists business to navigate the government contracting learning curve and make the whole process easier. The team advisors work with businesses to identify government contracting opportunities.

JSDC understands the difficult position you have to determine the state's future, and we appreciate all the thoughtfulness you have put into managing this responsibility. Please consider how programs and resources support the communities in the entire state as you make these decisions.

I urge the committee's support of SB2018.