

March 10, 2021

Rep. David Monson, Chair  
Appropriations Committee – Energy & Environmental Division  
North Dakota House of Representatives  
Via Electronic Mail

Dear Rep. Monson and Members of the Committee:

I'm writing in support of SB 2018, and specifically in support of the addition of seven-million dollars (\$7,000,000) to the Tourism Division for destination marketing.

I understand from the Committee's first overview of this measure that you all have some concerns about what seems like a significant increase in that marketing budget. Adding this amount to the base Tourism budget would bring the spending to promote the state across all platforms to about \$8,500,000 per year. Yes, that's an increase of about 70%, but it still leaves North Dakota well below the typical tourism spending of other states, including its closest neighbors. I have no concerns, whatsoever, about the Tourism Division Marketing Team's ability to turn that money into thousands of more visits to the state.

Effective marketing works, so—for me—it comes down to a question of whether you want to raise the profile of your state and attract more visitors and their money, or not. If you're happy with the status quo and think our cities and attractions should be happy with the visitation they've been getting, then don't spend any more money on it. It's your call, you hold the purse strings, and we all understand that. On the other hand, if you'd like your Marketing Team to be able to afford to get the word out, and invite more people to your beautiful state, you should seriously consider spending enough money to make that happen. We can't sit on our couches in Bismarck, or Medora, or Fargo, or Minot and whisper "gee, I wish more people would visit our state" and expect them to come. You have to invite them and inform them of all the state has to offer.

And again, as we've been telling you for years, marketing the state for tourism also has a huge impact on economic development and overall image, so please consider that aspect of this proposed increase, as well.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me by phone (701-365-4567 office, 701-371-9911 mobile) or via email, which is [charley@fargomoorhead.org](mailto:charley@fargomoorhead.org).

Sincerely,



Charley Johnson  
President & CEO