

Testimony of Julie Rygg
Visit Greater Grand Forks Executive Director
SB 2018
March 9, 2021



Chairperson Monson and members of the House Appropriations Education and Environment Committee:

Please accept this testimony, on behalf of Visit Greater Grand Forks (Visit GGF), as strong support of SB 2018, and the \$7 million in one-time funding.

While North Dakota's Tourism Division historically has worked with a smaller budget than competing states in the region, funds are increasingly more crucial as the travel and hospitality industries are struggling to survive the impacts of COVID-19. For reference below are funding figures for North Dakota and surrounding states in the 2019-21 biennium:

- North Dakota - \$9 million
- South Dakota - \$30.2 million
- Montana - \$19.5 million
- Minnesota - \$32.2 million

The partnership Visit Greater Grand Forks enjoys with the North Dakota Tourism Division has been even more beneficial as we have navigated through unprecedented times. We have been provided advertising and promotional opportunities at dramatically decreased costs along with opportunities to host travel writers and showcase our #SimplyGrand outdoor recreation.

Greater Grand Forks along with communities through North Dakota, the United States and the world have seen first-hand the tremendous economic impact of travel, which, in turn, means we need to take action to provide the support this industry needs right now, and the North Dakota Tourism Division is a crucial partner to move ahead.

Again, I ask for your support of SB 2018 and the one-time \$7 million funding. It is needed now more than ever. Thank you for your time and consideration.