

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and Esteemed Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is James Leiman and I have the honor of serving as the Director of Strategy for the North Dakota Department of Commerce. Today, I am here to express the Department's support for the development and deployment of an economic diversification research fund. As you are likely aware, recent programs aimed toward applied research as well as diversification activities have yielded impressive results for the state. In North Dakota, we are rapidly accelerating the growth of high-tech opportunities such as the recruitment and expansion of biotech, commercialization of intellectual property that improves agricultural and energy sector bottom lines, VANTIS- the nation's first Beyond Line of Sight program, and assists in recruiting top tier talent in every region. This concludes our supportive testimony and I stand for any questions. Thank you.