



Testimony
Senate Appropriations Committee
HOUSE BILL NO. 1141
March 31, 2021

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee. The Valley Prosperity Partnership (VPP) is an initiative led by business executives to advance and advocate for shared strategic economic development opportunities for the Red River Valley region and for North Dakota.

The business executives that lead companies across the state of North Dakota that comprise the VPP desire to strengthen and diversify our economy. They feel the best means of doing so at this moment in our state's history is by investing in research and development. Thanks to the vision of these business leaders and to public policy leaders like yourself, the legislature will have several proposals to debate that seek to diversify the state's economy by investing state dollars into the research and development enterprise of the state and into entrepreneurial companies in emerging, technology-driven industries.

One of those proposals is before you today – to continue a legacy innovation fund to support technology advancement. We support this investment in research and development, which has already impacted North Dakota's economy by funding many innovative companies with exciting ideas and high potential.

It's not only business leaders who support the state investing in research and development. So do the voters of ND. In a state-wide scientific poll commissioned by the VPP in 2018, we found that voters demonstrated strong support for research. Specifically, 79% of respondents agreed that the state of North Dakota should invest research dollars in new industries in addition to agriculture and energy in order to diversify the economy.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 1141, and please know that business leaders throughout the state support funding for research and development to strengthen and diversify our economy. As the attached infographic shows, there is considerable support from a coalition of businesses and industry groups for LIFT, which is an important part of the innovation ecosystem in North Dakota.



The Valley Prosperity Partnership (VPP) is focused on developing a unified, shared vision for high value and sustained economic growth for all Red River Valley residents. A steering committee of private sector industry and higher education leaders, joined by economic development partners, work to advance strategic economic development opportunities for the Red River Valley region of North Dakota and Minnesota and for the entire State of North Dakota.

Marshal Albright, President & CEO
Cass County Electric Cooperative,
Co-Chair, Valley Prosperity Partnership

Steve Burian, President & CEO
Burian & Associates
Co-Chair, Valley Prosperity Partnership

Judd Graham, CEO Fargo Region
Bremer Bank, Vice Co-Chair

Brian Johnson, CEO
Choice Financial Group, Vice Co-Chair

Andrew Armacost, President
University of North Dakota

Tom Astrup, President & CEO
American Crystal Sugar

Barry Batcheller, Chairman
Appareo Systems

Dean Bresciani, President
North Dakota State University

Dan Conrad, President & CEO
Blue Cross Blue Shield North Dakota

Tim Curoe, CEO
RD Offutt Company

Mylo Einarson, President & CEO
Nodak Electric Cooperative

Chad Flanagan, Partner
Eide Bailly

Shawn Gaddie, Director of Infrastructure
Management Services
AE2S

Jim Galloway, Principal
JLG Architects

Keith Lund, President & CEO
Grand Forks Region EDC

William C. Marcil, Sr. Chairman
Forum Communications Company

Pat McAdaragh, President & CEO
Midco

Jeff Melgaard, Vice President
Construction Engineers

Dave Molmen, CEO
Altru Health System

Bryan Nermoe, President
Sanford Medical Center Fargo

Tony Grindberg, ND Principal Manager
Xcel Energy

Joe Raso, President & CEO
Greater Fargo Moorhead EDC

John Richman, President
North Dakota State College of Science

Jim Roers, President & CEO
Roers Construction & Development

Thomas Shorma, President & CEO
WCCO Belting, Inc.

Richard Solberg, Chairman & CEO
Bell State Bank & Trust

Steve Swiontek, Executive Chair
Gate City Bank

David White, President
Border States Electric

Chris Wolf, North Valley Market President
Alerus Financial

STRENGTHENING AND DIVERSIFYING NORTH DAKOTA'S ECONOMY BY INVESTING IN **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

