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March 23, 2021

Senate Finance and Taxation

North Dakota House of Representatives

State Capitol Building

600 East Boulevard Avenue

Bismarck, ND 58505

Chair Bell and Finance Taxation Committee Members,

For the record, my name is Kim Schneider, and I am the Chief Executive Officer and registered lobbyist with the North Dakota Association of Builders (NDAB).

The NDAB would like to formally submit on record our opposition of HB 1277. Initially, the NDAB supported HB 1277 believing that the bill helped to assist homebuyers in the American Dream of owning your own home. Unfortunately, during committee work an amendment was added that would jeopardize the tax exemption that is already in place and utilized by many cities across the state by requiring a vote of the majority of qualified electors. We believe this is a decision that should be managed by City Commissioners and/or City Council members, those that the people voted into office to make local strategic policy decisions. The NDAB partners with six local associations in North Dakota located in Fargo, Grand Forks, Minot, Dickinson, Bismarck-Mandan, and Williston. Four of those cities currently utilize the tax exemption program to help aid their citizens with home ownership opportunities. We do not want to see this program put at risk and therefore, we oppose engrossed HB 1277.

The NDAB appreciates the work of Representative Schreiber-Beck and her proposed amendment to remove the problematic piece of the vote of the people. Currently, there are no other tax exemptions offered by a city that are required to be approved by a majority of qualified electors voting. The NDAB does support the proposed amendment and would encourage the committee to amend the language of the bill back to the original intent which ultimately provides a tool for the homebuyer by increasing the optional property tax exemption for new construction limit to \$250,000 for the first two taxable years.

Thank you,

Kim Schneider
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