

**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SENATE BILL 2203
SENATE INDUSTRY, BUSINESS AND LABOR COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 9, 2021**

JUSTIN DEVER - SENIOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST, MDU RESOURCES GROUP, INC.

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Justin Dever and I am testifying today on behalf of MDU Resources Group. MDU Resources presence in North Dakota includes Montana-Dakota Utilities Co., WBI Energy, Knife River Corporation, and MDU Construction Service Group.

Knife River Corporation has a long history in North Dakota, having formed in the state in 1917 and joined MDU in 1945. It is one of the largest construction materials and contracting companies in the United States operating in 15 states. During construction season, Knife River employs about 225 people in North Dakota.

SB 2203 would unduly punish employers in the state that are impacted by the weather. Knife River Corporation would like nothing more than to operate year-round in North Dakota, but our winter is not always conducive to outdoor construction projects.

We understand that employers making more use of the program should pay more for unemployment insurance. That is why we agree with the current system which has some employers paying as much as \$3,731 per employee, while others pay as little as \$30.80 per employee. In fact, North Dakota has the highest maximum unemployment insurance tax rate in the nation, along with the greatest difference between the maximum and minimum rates.

North Dakota's legislature has supported a fair business climate that has benefited the citizens of the state. I'm asking you to continue this practice by rejecting this tax increase and recommending a "Do Not Pass" on SB 2203.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to visit with you today. That concludes my testimony and I am happy to entertain any questions.