

SB 2203
Senate Industry Business and Labor
February 9, 2021

Good Afternoon Chairman Klein and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Art Thompson, and I am the Executive Director of the North Dakota Concrete Council.

Our association represents ready-mixed concrete and concrete product manufacturing and distribution companies along with their raw material suppliers. In addition, we represent the ND Chapter of the American Concrete Pavement Association, which includes concrete contractors. On average, the production and placement of concrete in North Dakota provides over \$500 million in annual economic impact. Unlike more specialized industries, our members are in every corner of the state and range from those with multi-state operations to family-owned local businesses. We employ thousands of hard-working men and women who take pride in building safe, long-lasting and resilient housing, schools, infrastructure and more throughout the state.

I am here today to ask you to vote NO on Senate Bill 2203.

- Our members, who employ a seasonal workforce, already pay the highest rates in the nation for unemployment insurance.
- Higher rates have the potential to put North Dakota businesses at a competitive disadvantage with out-of-state employers.
- Our members do not benefit when our employees are laid off. Limited or no workforce means significantly decreased or no revenues for our business. Further, our workforce would prefer to work 12-months per year. However, in with our climate that is not feasible. We do not “choose” to shut down for some of the winter months. Mother Nature “chooses” for us.
- A two-year interim study reviewed this issue at length. Their findings, by a 5-2 vote, showed the current system is working as is. The committee recommended no changes.
- At a time when North Dakota businesses are struggling to recover from the pandemic and are struggling to continue to provide gainful employment for North Dakota’s workforce, now is not the time to assess a proven unnecessary increase to North Dakota’s Unemployment Insurance tax rates.

SB 2203 is not good policy. It is not needed and should be defeated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.