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**TESTIMONY OF
KAROLIN JAPPE
EMERGENCY MANAGER
MCKENZIE COUNTY
BEFORE THE 68th LEGISLATIVE SESSION
SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
JANUARY 27, 2023
IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2016**

Chairman Sorvaag, members of the Senate Appropriations Education and Environment Committee Division, my name is Karolin Jappe and I am the emergency manager for McKenzie County, North Dakota. I am here today to testify in support of the Watch Center concept in Senate Bill 2016, a much-needed capability to ensure more thorough situational awareness and rapid emergency response for incidents impacting my county and all counties across North Dakota.

The proposed 24/7 state watch center would be highly beneficial to all emergency managers working at both the city and county levels. As proposed, the watch center will be able to gather and disseminate information about any emergency event, helping emergency managers better understand the size and scale of the situation and make more informed decisions. By serving as a central point of contact with 24/7 operability, the watch center will help streamline emergency response efforts and reduce the overall time it takes to respond to an emergency event. As we all know, time saved in an emergency often equates to saved lives, saved response costs, and saved recovery costs. The watch center will also better facilitate communication between different state agencies, helping to ensure that information shared from the local level is then circulated efficiently between all necessary state agency stakeholders.

A second, but equally important capability that the watch center will provide is the implementation of state-of-the-art technology. These technologies will be capable of leveraging the myriad of sensor data throughout the state, historical information, and 24/7 assessment and analysis to provide real or near real-time information. In addition, the implementation of a new public safety dashboard and tools for more easily communicating into and out of the field would be invaluable. These tools will help local leadership to provide better information to their citizens before, during and after a disaster which will result in a safer population and reduced local cost shares.

Conclusively, as a local emergency manager, I strongly believe that the creation of a 24/7 state level emergency watch center would greatly bolster our city and county emergency management efforts. With the improved communication, increased situational awareness, and increased efficiency that a watch center would provide, we would be better equipped to handle emergency events and keep our communities safe. I thank you for your support and the opportunity to testify before the committee today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.