

Testimony of Julie Rygg, Executive Director  
Visit Greater Grand Forks Executive Director  
House Bill 1018  
March 9, 2023

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Senator Wanzek and Committee Members:

I understand the Senate Appropriations Government Operations Committee will be discussing House Bill 1018 Friday, March 10, and I am writing on behalf of Visit Greater Grand Forks to share our support for Governor Burgum's recommendation for North Dakota Tourism & Marketing funding.

As you know, the bill originally invested \$50 million in a Destination Development Fund to expand unique attractions and bring new visitors, new money and new residents to the state by enhancing the quality of life current and future citizens enjoy.

Added partnerships through the Destination Development Fund will help create more attractions and activities that motivate out-of-state travel, keep visitors in the state longer and aid in workforce recruitment and retention. This is a perfect time for North Dakota to enhance and grow our offerings, and this opportunity could also be of great benefit to Grand Forks as there is work to build a children's museum, destination park and new athletic facilities.

As the third-largest industry in North Dakota, travel and tourism is an important component in the state's economic well-being. It creates new revenue, improves the quality of life for North Dakotans and helps retain vital workforce. We continue to compete for visitors and residents with other states in our region that have considerably higher budgets. If we want to attract people, we need the resources to do it.

Again, please support the Governor's recommendation for HB 1018.

Thank you for your time and consideration.