



March 13, 2025

Greetings from the Dickinson Convention & Visitors Bureau! I am excited to experience my first summer tourism season. I replaced veteran Terri Thiel who served as the Executive Director for the past 26 years. In the three months that I have been at the Dickinson CVB, I have quickly learned the impact that tourism has on our state. Therefore, this letter is in support of Senate Bill 2018, the ND Commerce Department appropriations bill since the Tourism Division funding is included.

We are neighbors to the Dickinson Museum Center where the Badlands Dinosaur Museum is located. With the largest display of real dinosaur fossils in the state and continued fieldwork uncovering new fossil discoveries, tourists are in awe seeing these exhibits. They can also watch the live work being done by the paleontologists from a window that looks directly into the lab area. This museum attracts visitors from around the globe, and it is amazing to think it is right here.

Living just 30 minutes west of Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the historic town of Medora, I see the impact that tourism has on both of those entities. I see the progress being made on the construction of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library. I am busy educating and preparing our own local lodging and hospitality managers on the direct impact this project is going to have on our community. Many corporate hotels are investing in their properties in Dickinson by renovating them in 2025, so they are ready for travelers in 2026.

To the east, we are only minutes away from the Enchanted Highway. This 30-mile stretch of highway filled with scrap metal sculptures is something people of all ages enjoy viewing. With plans for some fresh paint in 2025, these sculptures will continue to add to tourism in southwest North Dakota.

With these attractions in our backyard and other great sights across the state, it is important that our legislators provide necessary funding to attract tourists. We are hoping to see that the committee allocates equal to or more than the \$25 million that was given during the last legislative session for Destination Development Grants. The grants were widely popular, which proves that the need is there.

Secondly, please consider increasing the Tourism Division's marketing budget to \$10 million rather than the \$7 million that is currently stated. This increase would allow them the opportunity to grow and explore other markets which would widen their reach for tourists. This needs to be done for us to stay competitive with the states surrounding us! Being only an hour's drive from both the South Dakota and Montana borders, we want their tourists to visit North Dakota as well.

In closing, thank you for taking the time to serve in your elected position and for considering these funding concerns. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

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Dickinson Convention & Visitors Bureau

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