

Dear Representative Nathe,

Chairman, House Appropriations – Education and Environment Division

I am writing to express my strong support for the Department of Commerce Appropriations bill, SB 2018, which funds critical economic development programs in North Dakota. As the founder of Bench7, a dental software company based out of Bismarck, I have directly benefited from the Innovate ND Program administered through CTB/NDWBC. It has been an overwhelmingly positive experience and instrumental in growing my business.

The business coaching and funding provided through this program offered these key benefits:

- Engagement with customers
- Critical feedback used towards improving our product
- Networking and community engagement including an invitation to speak at Bismarck 1 Million Cups
- Advice regarding funding opportunities

Without this support, it would have been significantly more challenging to make critical decisions regarding the future of my company. Programs like Innovate ND not only help individual businesses but also contribute to North Dakota's broader economic development by fostering innovation, job creation, and industry growth.

I urge you to support Innovate ND in SB 2018 to ensure businesses like mine continue to have access to the resources necessary for success. Thank you for your time and consideration. If you would like to discuss my experience further, please feel free to contact me at john@bench7tech.com.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Persson, DDS

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