



Testimony of Nathan Schneider
Economic Development Association of North Dakota
Neutral Testimony of HB 1191
April 1, 2025

Chairman Barta and members of the Senate Industry and Business Committee:

My name is Nathan Schneider, and I am Vice President of Economic Development for the Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC and serve as the Secretary/Treasurer for the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND). It is in the capacity of an EDND board member that I provide neutral testimony for HB 1191 today.

EDND fully supports the advancement of entrepreneurship in North Dakota and recognizes its vital role in fostering innovation, driving job creation, and strengthening our state's economy. As you consider this bill, we would like to offer a few points for consideration to help ensure the success of any new efforts.

North Dakota is already home to a robust network of entrepreneurial support programs and organizations, including:

- Local and regional economic development programs, such as the Mandan Business Pitch Challenge and Fusion, a regional workforce conference in Southwest ND.
- Statewide incubators and accelerators, including Gener8tor and ILT Academy.
- Higher education innovation centers, such as the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program at Bismarck State College.
- Existing Department of Commerce initiatives, including InnovateND.
- Technical assistance providers and Small Business Development Centers, such as the North Dakota Women's Business Center, USDA Rural Business Development Grants and Dakota Business Lending.

With these existing programs in mind, we encourage the committee to consider how a new office might complement and coordinate with existing programs to avoid duplication and ensure efficient use of resources. Strengthening, connecting, and investing in the organizations already doing this work could be a valuable strategy to enhance the overall entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Additionally, consideration could be given to distributing funding regionally, allowing each region to build entrepreneurship strategies that reflect their unique assets, opportunities, and needs. A model similar to the Regional Workforce Impact Program (RWIP) could provide the flexibility and local insight necessary to ensure meaningful outcomes across the state.

Thank you and I'd be happy to answer any questions.