



**Testimony of Jennifer Greuel
Economic Development Association of North Dakota
In Support of SB 2014
March 8, 2021**

Chair Vigesaa and members of the House Appropriations Committee-
Government Operations Division:

I am Jennifer Greuel from the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND), and I would like to express our support for SB 2014, which includes the appropriation for the Bank of North Dakota (BND) and the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency (NDHFA).

EDND represents more than 150 state economic development organizations on the front line of economic development efforts throughout North Dakota. The primary purpose of the organization is to promote the creation of new wealth throughout North Dakota to develop more vibrant and efficient communities and to improve quality of life.

Bank of North Dakota

BND programs are important to and widely used by economic developers across the state. Supporting PACE and Flex PACE programs consistently arise as one of our developer's top legislative priorities and the top tools they use in their community. PACE and Flex PACE provide flexibility for businesses and development agencies to support new and growing businesses in a fiscally safe manner in both rural and urban North Dakota.

Speak to any local developer in the state and you will hear a wide variety of stories about the program's impact. A young entrepreneur from Carrington used the Flex PACE Program to help build a modern gym facility, providing 14 jobs and an opportunity for better health and wellness for the community. A malting company in Bismarck used Flex PACE to generate new wealth for the state and now sells its products to more than 70 breweries in 25 states. Mandan has used the program to meet

the community's demand for more restaurants. Baker Boy in Dickinson has used PACE and Flex PACE to continue to expand its business and increase out-of-state sales. Due to the overwhelming popularity of the program, EDND supports the Senate's inclusion of \$26 million in BND capital to fund the PACE/Flex PACE buy-down programs, \$5 million for Ag PACE and \$1 million for biofuels PACE. These programs increase property tax revenue, expand business capacity, create new and highly skilled jobs, and help entrepreneurs in communities throughout the state.

North Dakota Housing Finance Agency

Affordable housing also continues to be a priority for expansion of North Dakota's businesses and communities in all areas of North Dakota. The Housing Incentive Fund is a flexible gap financing tool leveraged to develop affordable multi-family housing for essential service workers, main street employees, fixed-income households, and older adults. A major stumbling block to attracting businesses, which would diversify the economy, or to attracting workers to fill the thousands of service jobs open in the state is a lack of affordable housing. The Senate included \$15 million for the Housing Incentive Fund and EDND asks for your consideration to fund this tool.

EDND understands the difficult decisions you have to determine the state's future, and we appreciate the thoughtfulness you have put into managing this responsibility. Please consider how programs and resources support the communities in the entire state as you make these decisions. I urge the committee's support of these priorities within SB 2014. Thank you.