

Testimony in support of HB 1431

Chad Flanagan, Eide Bailly, Partner-In-Charge

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Chairman Delzer, members of the House Appropriations Committee,

For the record my name is Chad Flanagan and I am the Partner-In-Charge of the Fargo office for Eide Bailly. I am writing today in **support of HB 1431**. This bonding bill includes various investment opportunities that are sure to generate lasting impact on our state. A few of those iconic funding requests are Cass County's Career Workforce Academy, the FM Area Diversion Project and a NDSU Ag Productions Development Center.

As we work with our clients, we hear from them that there are more open jobs than there are people available to fill those positions. In 2019 Job Service reported that there were over 4,000 open jobs in Cass County. We need to match industry opportunity with education capacity. Career Workforce Academies have proven a successful model to train local workforce. This investment isn't taking a chance on a potential workforce solution, there are more than 7,000 successful Career Academies in the Country, one being right here in Bismarck.

I commend Cass County School districts and NDSCS for working collaboratively along with the private sector in order to make this project a reality. It speaks volumes to the need for this academy that our region raised nearly \$21 million dollars over the past two years. Workforce is often talked as a top priority for our state, I respectfully ask that you act on that through supporting HB 1431, including the \$9 million in funding for a career academy in Fargo.

In addition, bonding the remaining FM Diversion project funds is a good financial decision for this project as it saves the taxpayers, \$20 million just by way of eliminating the need for short-term bonding. Further, having the funds up front ensures the project can stay on schedule, eliminating additional costs potential deferrals would add.

Lastly, in order to continue conducting internally-recognized research, we need to invest in infrastructure at NDSU. Harris Hall has numerous insufficiencies making it unsuitable for such research. The Ag Productions Development Center will serve as an appropriate location to house quality research.

I respectfully ask you to **support House Bill 1431** as it includes critical funding for our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Chad Flanagan