



House Appropriations Committee – HB 1431

Representative Jeff Delzer, Chair

February 1, 2021

Chairman Delzer, Members of the Committee:

My name is Brian Ritter and I'm President of the Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC. I am here today on behalf of our organization's approximately 1,200 members in support of HB 1431.

There are a number of aspects in HB 1431 that we're supportive of, one specifically being the ability to bond for infrastructure projects. In every corner of the State, there are communities with water, road and other infrastructure needs that could benefit from the additional monies being made available in HB 1431. Coupled with historically low interest rates, there has never been a better time to leverage our State's resources and reinvest in North Dakota via these projects. In addition, doing so will provide opportunities for 'blue collar' and 'white collar' businesses alike to perform the work necessary to put in place that infrastructure. And coming out of the economic slowdown caused by COVID-19, the timing is perfect.

Additionally, HB 1431 provides support for Bismarck State College's (BSC) new polytechnic mission. For decades, BSC has been a leader in workforce development whether it's through their energy generation programs or their innovative partnerships with Bismarck Public Schools to enhance career and technical education. Their evolution into the State's first and only polytechnic institution is a logical next step and a needed one if we're going to address the growing number of workforce development challenges here in Bismarck-Mandan. This

community still has nearly 2,400 open jobs and they're across all industry sectors. Fortunately, BSC is ideally suited to help fill those jobs and the support in HB 1431 will help them do so.

For these reasons, we stand with a number of other organizations and communities from across the State in support of HB 1431.

Respectfully,

Brian Ritter, President
Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC