



**Testimony**  
**House Appropriations Committee**  
**HOUSE BILL NO. 1431**  
**February 1, 2021**

Chairman Delzer and members of the House Appropriations Committee. The Valley Prosperity Partnership (VPP) is an initiative led by business executives to advance and advocate for shared strategic economic development opportunities that will strengthen and diversify the Red River Valley region and North Dakota. Thanks to the vision of these business leaders and to public policy leaders like yourself, the legislature will have multiple proposals to consider that seek to accomplish those goals by investing state dollars into infrastructure projects and workforce development.

First, we want to thank the legislature for supporting water control and supply projects that are of vital importance to the regional and state economy and to ask you to earnestly consider further financial support of these projects to bring them to completion. Flood control, via the FM Diversion project, is of the utmost importance to the economy of the Valley and the state. As everyone knows from the Grand Forks flood of 1997, business and economic productivity was impacted for years. The consensus of the business community – those making investments in the communities and creating jobs – is clear: permanent flood protection is a must not only for human safety but for economic stability and vitality. Therefore, the VPP supports the issuance of bonds to complete the important infrastructure projects included in HP 1431.

The Valley Prosperity Partnership believes that funding these water control and supply priorities is a long-term economic strategy that has statewide implications. Our CEOs firmly stand behind the need of these projects and the certainty they will provide the businesses they lead.

Workforce development has been ~~the~~ one of the VPP's highest priorities since its establishment in 2012. As business leaders in the Red River Valley, we believe that career workforce academies offer the specialized training that is urgently needed by employers throughout North Dakota. They will expand career and technical education and training that focuses on career pathway programs that align with industry growth clusters with the highest potential for creating growth and shared prosperity.



Collaborative efforts involving considerable financial commitments by local businesses have been underway in the Fargo region for several years; similar efforts are underway in Grand Forks. Therefore, the VPP supports an appropriation of \$92,500,000 for the department of career and technical education operating fund.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 1431, which the VPP wholeheartedly supports.



The Valley Prosperity Partnership (VPP) is focused on developing a unified, shared vision for high value and sustained economic growth for all Red River Valley residents. A steering committee of private sector industry and higher education leaders, joined by economic development partners, work to advance strategic economic development opportunities for the Red River Valley region of North Dakota and Minnesota and for the entire State of North Dakota.

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