

North Dakota

Travel Alliance Partnership

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MEMBERS

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Missouri Valley Heritage Alliance/
Fort Abraham Lincoln
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Norsk Hostfest Association
North Dakota Association of
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North Dakota State Fair
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Scenic Byway
Vern's Rental
Williston CVB

Testimony of Terri Thiel

Chair, Travel Alliance Partnership

In support of HB 1431

March 31, 2021

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

My name is Terri Thiel, and I am the chair of the North Dakota Travel Alliance Partnership (ND TAP). ND TAP is a coalition of travel industry stakeholders, including CVBs, state attractions, businesses and other interested stakeholders, in this viable and growing sector of North Dakota's economy. On behalf of the tourism industry and its partners, I am writing to voice support for HB 1431.

HB 1431 funds many projects important to North Dakota's tourism industry. Specifically, HB 1431 designates \$4 million to Dickinson State University for a Pulver Hall Project which compliments the Teddy Roosevelt Presidential Library Museum. The first floor of Pulver Hall will reflect the historical period in which Roosevelt lived and will be based on the rooms of his past residence. Pulver Hall will also contain artifacts from Roosevelt's life and serve as a "must-see" attraction in North Dakota.

HB 1431 will also designate \$10 million to the State Park Fund. As tourism experiences shift in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, demand for outdoor activities including camping is experiencing a boom. North Dakota's thirteen state parks saw a 35% increase in campsite nights from May 1 – Oct. 31 last

year compared to same period in 2019. As demand for campsites continues to rise across the state, HB 1431 will provide critical funding for deferred maintenance and amenities for state parks, enhancing the very experiences travelers seek.

Additionally, HB 1431 provides critical funding for infrastructure vital to North Dakota's tourism industry including the state's roads and highways as visitors seek access to the North Dakota's parks and communities.

Tourism plays an important role in sustaining quality of life for all of North Dakota, and HB 1431 plays an important role in funding projects critical to the state's tourism industry. Therefore, ND TAP asks the Senate Appropriations Committee recommend a do-pass on HB 1431.