

Testimony Prepared for the  
**Senate Appropriations**

January 20, 2021

By: Terry Traynor, NDACo Executive Director



**RE: Senate Bill 2020 - Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute Budget**

Chairman Holmberg and Appropriations Committee members, I am Terry Traynor, Executive Director of the North Dakota Association of Counties, and I have the pleasure of serving as the current Chair of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute's Advisory Council. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this agency's budget that, in turn, supports the great transportation research on which policy makers at all levels have come to rely.

As an example, the Institute's Local Roads Study has become a valuable resource as a county planning and budgeting tool, identifying local road project funding priorities across the state. The objective scientific assessment methods used by the Institute provide the level of detailed data needed when counties are committing large investments for roads impacted by agriculture, manufacturing, and energy industry traffic.

The Institute's development and implementation of GRIT (Geographic Roadway Inventory Tool) after the 2016 Local Roads Study, has provided a consistent tracking and reporting data tool regarding road conditions, project costs, and safety concerns. With enhancements previously funded by the Legislature, GRIT has become the "go to" local road database for many, many users, including UGPTI itself, North Dakota Department of Transportation, LoadPass, and the Legislature.

With constant changes in the number, size, and weight of vehicles used in this state, as well as the types and volumes of loads they carry, the use and impact on our transportation network is continually changing. The Institute's supplemental request of \$225,000 for remote sensing of surface transportation infrastructure using data from drones, is just another example how they could better meet the information needs of their stakeholders in this rapidly changing environment.

The Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute consistently provides high quality data and information on traffic safety, transit, construction cost trends, rail/road interaction, and a host of issues that help ensure decision-making is results-based. They are recognized across the country for the quality of their research.

We strongly support the budget of UGPTI and supplemental request. Thank you.