

February 10, 2023

Members of the North Dakota House Appropriations Committee

Re: Support for HB1168 – Automation Tax Credit

Dear Chairman Vigessa and members of the House Appropriations Committee:

My name is Rick Lemke, President of the Red River Manufacturers & Engineers Association (RRMEA), representing area manufacturers in the region. **I am writing to you on behalf of the RRMEA board to ask you to vote yes on [HB1168](#), regarding the Automation Tax Credit renewal and increased funding.**

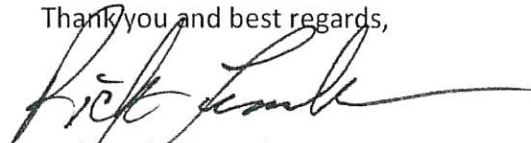
North Dakota manufacturing is one of the key pillars of our region's future economic footprint. To support that growth, we need our member organizations to be able to meet market opportunities by building new products, increasing output, and finding ways to do things better and more efficiently.

One of the biggest challenges right now for manufacturers is workforce. There just simply aren't enough workers to meet the demands and opportunities that are available to our manufacturers. There are many initiatives underway to address workforce, including recruiting and attraction initiatives, driving interest in manufacturing with students, and immigration. These are just a few of those initiatives and all supported by RRMEA. Automation is another key strategy to address this shortage.

Automation allows manufacturers to continue growing while needing less workers to operate the lines. A great example of this is GPK Products. GPK engineers and fabricates pipe fittings and is part of a supply chain that starts in Fargo and extends nationally. The manufacturing line at one time required 3 workers to drive but is now fully automated. Without automation, that line would sit idle. GPK took advantage of the Automation Tax Credit to find a solution, make the investment, and now their output continues to grow while workforce challenges are being addressed.

We ask you to vote **YES** on HB1168 for the benefit of our members and the growth we want them to drive for our region. The tax credit will help our members continue to drive the innovation and economic benefits that are available to our members and that our region is counting on them to deliver.

Thank you and best regards,



Rick Lemke, President

RRMEA Board Members:

- Will Cromarty, Director of Business Development, Aerial Robotics
- Russell Martinson, Director of Sales, Be More Colorful
- Ryan Asheim, Chief Business Development Officer, FM Economic Development Organization
- Josh Herbold, Vice President & Commercial Relationship Manager, Bremer Bank
- Lacee Bjork Anderson, CEO, The Birch Group
- Bernie Dardis, Mayor, City of West Fargo
- Jenna Mueller, Foundation Executive Director, Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce
- Kristi Schreiber, Vice President of Finance, Unity Holdings, Inc.
- Rach Lolmasteymaugh, Executive Director, Midwest Manufacturers Association