

Testimony in SUPPORT OF SB 2024

from Pam Crawford, North Dakota Tobacco Prevention and Control Advisory and
Executive Committee to the Senate Appropriations Committee

January 11, 2017

Chairman Holmberg and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

I am Pam Crawford. I am a newly appointed member of the Tobacco Prevention and Control Advisory Committee and I am here today advocating for this organization.

I AM IN SUPPORT OF SB2024 – AND I am opposed to SB 2084.

I have had the opportunity to attend one Advisory Committee meeting and was asked about my passion for the work of the organization. I was at a loss in response because I was not sure that I was “passionate” about tobacco prevention. I knew about the health consequences of smoking and second-hand smoking. I was aware that it is a difficult addiction to overcome. But “passion” was not one of the qualities I felt I brought to the table. However, after meeting the staff and Advisory Committee Members I was passionate by the end of that first meeting. Their passion is contagious.

This group has one sole purpose and focus. They exemplify efficiency, fiscal responsibility and creativity in government. They have a proven track record of making a difference for the better for North Dakota citizens.

The funding and mission of this organization was established by North Dakota voters in 2008 with the passage of Initiated Measure No. 3 requiring the State to develop and implement a comprehensive statewide tobacco prevention and control plan consistent with CDC’s best practices. Funding for this agency is provided through the Tobacco Settlement strategic payments. This agency has been fiscally responsible in its utilization of those funds.

To terminate this agency at this time appears incongruent with the wishes of North Dakota voters who wanted this comprehensive program, wanted this agency to develop and administer the program and wanted the strategic payments to be utilized to fund this program. The initiated measure states “Moneys received into the fund are to be administered by the executive committee for the purpose of creating and implementing the comprehensive plan.” It goes on to state “If in any biennium, the tobacco prevention and control trust fund does not have adequate dollars to fund a comprehensive plan, the treasurer shall transfer money from the water development trust fund to the tobacco prevention and control trust fund in an amount equal to the amount determined necessary by the executive committee to fund a comprehensive plan.” (N.D.C.C. 54-27-25(2) as written in Measure 3 effective December 4, 2008)). This is not a time-limited commitment. There is no requirement for the agency to spend all of the trust fund within a specified period of time. There is no sunset clause.

It is proven that tobacco prevention and cessation programs save lives and reduce tobacco related health care costs. Investing in this program is fiscally sound not only because there is a

proven return on the investment¹ but also because this agency has operated in a very fiscally responsible manner.

SB 2084 allows the strategic payments to be used for the “purposes appropriated.” It entirely eliminates the Tobacco Prevention and Control Advisory Committee.

I urge you all to support the continuation of the work of Breathe North Dakota AND SUPPORT SB2024. Please continue this excellent good work and honor the wishes of the state’s citizens who voted in favor of Measure No. 3.

¹ Declining smoking rates have contributed to reduced tobacco-related health care costs. An economic evaluation in 2012 found that for every dollar invested in the state Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, the investment actually saved the state \$5 in tobacco-related hospitalizations. Dilley, J.A., Harris, J.R., Boysun, M.J., Reid, T.R., 2012. *Program, policy, and price interventions for tobacco control: quantifying the return on investment of a state tobacco control program*. American Journal of Public Health 102, e22-28; quoted in *TOBACCO FACTS Washington State 2015 Update*; page 1, <http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/340-149-WashingtonTobaccoFacts.pdf> (last visited January 9, 2017)