



City of Watford City

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March 30, 2023

Petra H. Mandigo Hulm, Clerk
North Dakota Supreme Court
600 East Boulevard Ave
Bismarck, ND 58505-0530

RE: Vacancy in Judgeship No. 3, Northwest Judicial District – Supreme Court No. 20230068

The Watford City City Council was recently notified of the retirement of the Honorable Paul W. Jacobson in 2023. We thank you for the opportunity to participate in public input and we ask that you **please accept this letter of support to retain a full slate of 6 judgeships in the Northwest Judicial District.**

ANY reduction in the number of judgeships in the Northwest Judicial would have negative impacts on the city of Watford City and inhibit due process in the North Dakota Northwest Judicial District. In 2010, the US Census counted Watford City at 1,744 people. In 2020, it counted 6,360, a 365% population increase in that decade. Today, in 2023, the US Census Bureau estimates Watford City at 7,545, another 21.5% population increase in the last three years.

Job Service ND projects that Region #1 (Divide, Williams, McKenzie counties) will see a 30% increase in workforce demand over the next decade. This projected labor demand will continue to drive rapid population growth in the Northwest Judicial District.

McKenzie County has invested in judicial infrastructure to host processes that support efficiency of due process. We ask that the state of North Dakota to support the judgeships needed to maintain that efficiency and understand that continued rapid growth will continue to challenge and push workload within the Northwest Judicial District.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our support to retain a full slate of 6 judgeships in the Northwest Judicial District.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Riely".

Phil Riely, Mayor of Watford City