



March 21, 2023

North Dakota Supreme Court
c/o Petra H. Mandigo Hulm, Clerk of the Supreme Court
600 E. Boulevard Ave
Bismarck, ND 58505-0530

Please accept this letter of support for filling the Northwest Judicial District judgeship vacancy created by the retirement of the Honorable Paul W. Jacobson on May 31st, 2023.

The Williams County Board of County Commissioners recognize the importance of an efficient and robust district court system, as demonstrated by our significant investments in remodeling and modernization the Williams County Courthouse. Over the past 10 years Williams County has relocated County administrative departments & staff to a newly constructed building expressly to allow room for expansion of court services, including the addition of judge seats to our region, and to improve timeliness of the court dockets.

The interconnectivity between law enforcement, prosecutors and district judges is fundamental to the efficient processing of criminal cases. Williams County agencies rely on the availability of judges for the issuance of warrants and timely court proceedings for individuals charged with a crime. Criminal case counts have been stable over the past 5 years, but the complexity of cases has increased. Any reduction in the number of judges available in our region would jeopardize the efficient execution of work by public servants and impinge on the rights of our citizens for a speedy resolution.

Docket currency, and the efficient processing of civil cases, is especially critical in our region due to the volume and complexity of oil/gas mineral rights and associated probate cases. Williams County is anticipating growth in the diversity of petroleum-related industries operating in our communities, which will only increase the variety of cases before the court and draw more people to the region. Business owners and citizens rely on the courts for timely processing of their civil matters, any reduction in the number of judges in the Northwest District would negatively impact individuals, small business owners and corporations.

District Court judges provide critical services to Williams County agencies and citizens, the Board of County Commissioners implore the Supreme Court to retain a full slate of 6 judgeships in the Northwest District.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cory Hanson
Chairman, Williams County Board of County Commissioners

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