

March 21, 2023

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

20230068
FILED MARCH 24, 2023
CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

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

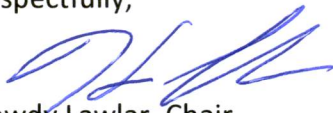
The McKenzie County Commissioners were recently notified of the retirement of the Honorable Paul W. Jacobson on May 31, 2023. The North Dakota Supreme Court indicates it will accept comments regarding the upcoming vacancy until April 10, 2023. Please accept this letter of support to retain a full slate of 6 judgeships in the Northwest Judicial District.

McKenzie County has undergone multiple renovation projects over the last ten years to provide adequate court space to include judges' chambers, judicial staff workspace, clerk's office, and a staff attorney office. In addition to judicial officers and personnel, the county has built two new jury capable courtrooms and a large jury room. In addition, the county maintains the presence of security daily when court is in session by deputies of the McKenzie County Sheriff's Office.

The impact of the oil boom has been long lasting and continues to demonstrate its lingering effect on caseloads and probate cases in the NWJD. The population in McKenzie County has tripled over the last decade, as seen most recently in the 2020 Census which identified McKenzie County as the fastest growing county in the *nation*, and estimates continue to show increases in population and activity in this region. The judges in the NWJD have and continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to the citizens and businesses living and working here. The Commission not only recognizes this but in turn continues to support the needs of the judiciary. McKenzie County recalls the days of fewer judges in our district, which resulted in delays in processing both criminal and civil cases. Any reductions in the number of judges of the NWJD would negatively impact all residents of McKenzie, Divide, and Williams Counties, and has the ability to potentially inhibit the growth of the region.

The McKenzie County Board of Commissioners respectfully request retaining Judgeship No. 3 in the NWJD with chambers in Williston. The distribution of judicial support is recognized, appreciated, and strongly requested to be continued into the future.

Respectfully,



Howdy Lawlar, Chair
McKenzie County Board of County Commissioners