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Kelly A. Rusch, Ph.D., P.E., BCEE
Executive Director, ND EPSCoR
P.O. Box 6050 – Dept. 4200
Fargo, ND 58108

Dear Kelly,

On behalf of the North Dakota EPSCoR State Steering Committee [NDESSC], I am delighted to write this letter re-affirming the committee's endorsement of the Science and Technology Plan [Plan] released in July 2018. The research and education activities outlined in the ND-ACES RII Track-1 proposal align with the goals and strategies of the Plan and represent a collaborative effort to diversify the state's economy by serving as a catalyst for capacity building in the fledgling biotechnology arena.

As you are aware, the NDESSC embarked on a concentrated review and discussion of the Plan over the course of the past six months. As a result of this review, NDESSC articulated its top four priorities, which include:

1. Capitalize on the strong alignment of NDSU and UND priorities with state research areas by recognizing and nurturing symbiotic research and educational strengths not only in the PUIs and TCs, but in the state commitment to K-12.
2. Continue to expand the networking that ND EPSCoR supports, with special attention given to broadly communicating the impacts that science and engineering have had on ND.
3. Foster the understanding that research and educational quality are inextricably linked.
4. Connect research advances in basic and applied science and engineering to opportunities for commercial successes and especially those that have broad impacts on the state.

Recent expansions of several private sector biopharmaceutical/biomedical entities, commitment of the state's two research universities to research areas in the biosciences/health fields, and continued and growing collaborations with the primary undergraduate institutions, tribal colleges, and master's college/university fit well within these priorities. The overall expansion of efforts by ND EPSCoR, and the RII Track-1 in particular, is critical for the continued growth of STEM strength in the state.

Respectfully,

Casey Ryan, MD
Member, State Board of Higher Education
Chair, EPSCoR State Steering Committee