



**NORTH DAKOTA
PLANNING ASSOCIATION**
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NDPA Board

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March 7, 2025
Committee Hearing: SB 2097
House Political Subdivisions Committee

Representative Longmuir and committee members:

The North Dakota Planning Association is writing in support of Senate Bill 2097. This bill would provide valuable funding to the rural communities of the state. Planning is often underfunded in our rural communities, not because there is no interest, but because current needs trump long-range planning every time. Conversely, though, planning is essential to receiving funding for projects. SB2097 would provide funding to those rural communities to help them move the needle in favor of positive development, whether that's through economic development initiatives, funding essential services such as groceries, or improving essential and aging infrastructure (roads, sewer, water).

Most of our rural communities are not looking for handouts for extraneous work - and would probably prefer not to use grants - but still don't have the cash on hand to do more than occasionally grade or repair a street. A fund such as this could help replace cracked water lines and sinking streets, while also providing incentives to retain existing businesses which provide services to our smaller communities. Because the needs of our rural communities are so diverse, a wide-spread fund such as this would be of much more assistance than more targeted funds, allowing for communities who know their needs best to advocate for and utilize those dollars in the most advantageous way to them.

As planners who work and live in rural communities, we understand these needs better than most and we strongly urge a DO PASS recommendation.

Please let me know if we can be of any assistance or provide additional information.

North Dakota Planning Association Board
Rachel Laqua, AICP
President



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