

March 28, 2025

Senator Wanzek and members of the Senate Appropriations Government Operations Division:

Western Region Economic Development (WRED), representing Divide, McKenzie, Mountrail, and Williams Counties of North Dakota, **supports HB1524** to create and enact a new section to chapter 54-40 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the funding of regional planning councils; and to provide an appropriation. Tri-County Regional Development Council (TCRDC) Region 1 being the primary regional council for WRED. **However, WRED requests that the budget be increased from \$2.4 million to \$5.75 million as outlined in the NDARC State Ask.**

Regional councils play an essential role in economic and community development across North Dakota. For decades they have provided technical expertise, project management, and funding assistance that otherwise wouldn't be available to our communities due to lack of resources in our small towns.

Regional councils assist in securing funding for economic development, infrastructure, and essential services. They assist with complex grant applications and project administration, utilizing state and federal funding sources. Many small towns would struggle to compete for these funding opportunities without the regional councils' assistance.

TCRDC has assisted businesses in securing gap financing and applying for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to benefit our rural communities. They have been an integral part of securing funding for housing, infrastructure, and workforce growth over the years. By adding this funding to the North Dakota Century Code, it secures our regional councils as a resource to our communities.

WRED urges you to **support HB1524 with a budget of \$5.75 million** as our regional councils are vital to the economic landscape of North Dakota. This bill will ensure that they have the resources to continue to help our communities thrive.

Sincerely,



Ann Kvande
Executive Officer