

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4035**

Introduced by

Senator Christenson

1 A concurrent resolution directing the Legislative Council to study legislative alternatives to foster  
2 and promote economic development in areas on or near the Indian reservations in North  
3 Dakota, including rural areas near Indian reservations.

4 **WHEREAS**, the results of the decennial census of the state of North Dakota show that  
5 the fastest growing population within the state is Native Americans living within or near Indian  
6 reservations; and

7 **WHEREAS**, census results and other studies also show that the areas of the greatest  
8 concentration of poverty and unemployment in North Dakota are on or near the Indian  
9 reservations in the state and these areas of poverty and unemployment often extend to  
10 counties surrounding the reservations; and

11 **WHEREAS**, over 50 percent of all welfare recipients in the state of North Dakota are  
12 Native Americans, approximately one-third of the prison population is Native American, and the  
13 percentage of unemployed who are capable of work on the Indian reservations in North Dakota  
14 is greater than 50 percent; and

15 **WHEREAS**, various economic development efforts are being made and have been  
16 made by the federal government that will benefit Indian reservations but these efforts have not  
17 been sufficient to relieve the poor economic conditions that exist on the reservations in North  
18 Dakota; and

19 **WHEREAS**, tribal governments are also allocating a large portion of their resources  
20 toward economic development, including funds derived from lawful gaming activities conducted  
21 on the reservations, and have shown that these economic activities also assist in economic  
22 growth in nearby rural communities, but in light of population growth and the limited resources  
23 available to tribal governments, including the federal funds set aside on their behalf, the limited  
24 income and employment opportunities from gaming activities lawfully conducted in rural areas

1 of the state and other sources of revenue and efforts at economic development, economic  
2 conditions for areas on or near reservations have only marginally improved; and

3 **WHEREAS**, the cost to the state of poor economic conditions on or near the Indian  
4 reservations is enormous, including the loss of state revenues because of low economic activity  
5 and low employment rates, the cost of welfare assistance, the cost of housing a large prison  
6 population, and the cost of other social issues associated with poverty and is probably  
7 measured in an amount in the hundreds of millions of dollars; and

8 **WHEREAS**, barriers to economic development on or near the Indian reservations and in  
9 surrounding rural areas include, among other things, lack of access to capital, lack of job  
10 training opportunities, lack of employment opportunities, lack of incentives to invest, such as  
11 programs that would reduce or eliminate taxes for specific periods, and lack of infrastructure  
12 necessary for investment; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the state of North Dakota has already enacted various economic  
14 development proposals that largely benefit the urban areas of the state and provide some  
15 assistance to rural areas but do not target the areas with the greatest concentration of poverty  
16 within the state, namely, areas on or near Indian reservations;

17 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE**  
18 **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:**

19 That the Legislative Council study legislative proposals that would provide economic  
20 incentives or provide targeted programs with measurable outcomes that would assist in  
21 economic development on or near the Indian reservations in North Dakota and in rural areas  
22 around the reservations, including proposals that would assist tribes and tribal members to gain  
23 access to capital needed for economic development; reduce or eliminate taxes for a specific  
24 period of time; enhance the capacity of state economic development programs already in  
25 existence to be coordinated with federal programs that promote economic development for  
26 Indian reservations; enhance the capacity of the Bank of North Dakota to provide loans for  
27 economic development on or near the reservations, such as lower interest rate loans; and  
28 create programs targeted to assist individual tribal members and other rural entrepreneurs to  
29 create and expand businesses that are likely to succeed in rural areas; and

- 1           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Legislative Council report its findings and
- 2   recommendations, together with any legislation required to implement the recommendations, to
- 3   the Fifty-ninth Legislative Assembly.