

Chairman Delzer and committee members, for the record I am Mark Ottis from Kindred

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

We have a unique opportunity to attract new citizens to our communities with many companies allowing employees to work from home. The economics of many small communities rely on one or two major employers in one or two industries. The benefit of remote working is that people choose where they want to live, by how they want to live, not where their employment requires them to live.

I have witnessed this trend in my hometown, Kindred. In our community we have a small housing development that was started 13 years ago. One of the things that we learned early in the process was the disadvantage our community has, because it does not have natural gas. Natural gas offers the consumer a reliable convenient and economically attractive energy source. It is essential for attracting industry to our rural communities and it also may offer savings that help small businesses survive. For the past seven years, we have been trying to attract a supplier of natural gas. The challenges are similar to Rural Electrification. It's difficult to make the economics work with the number of customers that are present today. We also know, if natural gas was available in our communities we would grow. With the anticipated future growth the economics would work. We just need a little help getting there.

What I am trying to say is that Kindred is ready to grow, we have a desire to grow, and we offer an attractive lifestyle. Help us put the last piece of this puzzle in place.

Mark Ottis