EPIC Companies
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1.29.23
Chairman Headland and members of the Finance and Taxation Committee:

For the record, my name is Todd Berning, and I am the President of EPIC Companies. EPIC Companies is an investment, development, and management firm based out of West Fargo, Bismarck and Minot, ND. We take underutilized spaces and construct mixed-use buildings that enhance communities through innovative development. Over the years our team has developed in many communities throughout North Dakota while working with multiple municipalities. We have over 30+ mixed-use buildings that contain commercial space, apartments, and condos along with plaza spaces that we have developed. Today, on behalf of our 85 employees, I offer opposition to House Bill 1495.

Under this House Bill 1495, it provides counties the option to opt out of TIF projects….This in turn creates a large burden for cities and school districts to carry the weight of a project they feel is beneficial for their community. TIF's allows local governments to invest in public infrastructure and other improvements up-front. Local governments can then pay later for those investments. They can do so by capturing the future anticipated increase in tax revenues generated by the project. Despite the counties being able to opt out of the TIF they would still be able to receive some of the benefits from the TIF entities.

We have used TIF's to create new public spaces such as The Lights in West Fargo and The Beacon in Grand Forks, revitalize old buildings such as the M Building in downtown Minot, and redo public streets next to our affordable housing development Blu on Broadway in Minot. A TIF was also used for our project in conjunction with the University of Jamestown to help create additional student housing and commercial space. Without TIF's, these developments would not be possible or restricted to the way they are built. In order to create these public amenity spaces, TIF's alleviate the stress on a private developer, along with ensure that these developments are built with the community in mind.

This bill as written could have negative impacts on economic development and make it more difficult to provide public amenities, destination locations, support local art, etc. We support strategic efforts to energize our communities like TIF's. On behalf of our members, I would like to encourage the committee not to pass House Bill 1495.

Sincerely,

Todd Berning,
President of EPIC Companies

EPIC COMPANIES
Investment • Development • Management