



Testimony of Lyn James in support of HB 1018 – with an amendment
To Senate Appropriations Committee – Government Operations Division
March 9, 2023

Senator Wanzek and members of the Committee:

As President of the Bowman City Commission, I would like to offer my support for an **amendment to HB 1018, \$8 million for regional councils across the state**. The capacity this would add to each of our regions, specifically for our rural communities, would be one of the best return on investment opportunities the state could make.

Until recently, our regional council had struggled to continue operations. In the last year, we have seen a revival of the council, and a renewed interest from our counties and cities to support regional development. Our counties are excited about the opportunity to work together to support tourism growth across our region, collaborate on workforce initiatives, and support efforts to solve issues in housing, childcare, and outmigration.

In our community, we have seen a population decline in our last three census counts. This is very concerning, and other communities in our region are seeing the same. We have an opportunity to work collectively on regional development, but without added capacity to seek out resources, develop programs and initiatives, and make this work happen, forward momentum will be difficult.

Regional Councils are able to focus uniquely on the strengths and challenges in a region. In Region 8, we have a different set of opportunities than any of our neighboring regions, and this allows for an individualized approach to development.

I urge you to add this amendment to HB 1018, for the continued appropriation to regional councils. Please let me know if you have any questions.