February 2, 2025

Honorable Representative Craig Headland
State Representative
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: HB 1524 – Funding for North Dakota Regional Councils

Dear Representative Headland:

Please accept my testimony in support of HB 1524 that provides financial support for the Regional Councils across North Dakota. Barnes County is in Region VI that includes Stutsman, Wells, Foster, Griggs, Logan, LaMoure, McIntosh, and Dickey Counties.

Staying current with State and Federal program requirements is a huge undertaking where Regional Council assistance is needed. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Community Development Loan Funds (CDLF) are critical funding sources that must be accessed through Regional Councils.

Benefits of Regional Councils include:
1. Technical support and access to CDBG funds for water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer mainlines.
2. Community Development Loan Funds (CDLF) for business development.
3. Revolving Loan Programs provide funding sources for business development.
4. Assistance with flood mitigation and flood buyouts.
5. Technical support to access funds through the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) for industrial development such as industrial parks, technology parks and technology centers that serve as business incubators for new and growing companies.
6. Other assistance includes:
    a. Serving as fiscal agent for other funding sources
    b. Mitigation planning
    c. Developing and updating County and township ordinances and land use planning and zoning
    d. Community planning
    e. Grant writing and technical assistance that supports housing development, childcare support, workforce development, tourism, and disaster recovery planning.

Communities simply do not have the capacity to perform the work required and to ensure State and Federal funding requirements are met. The Regional Councils are invaluable. Please support HB 1524 and funding to support North Dakota's Regional Councils. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Feist
Director of Development