

Monday, February 3, 2025

Chairman Headland and Committee Members,

My name is Ryan Jilek, and I serve as the Executive Vice-President for Stark Development Corporation and a board member of Roosevelt Custer Regional Council. I am submitting testimony in strong support of House Bill 1524, which has been identified as a top priority for Region 8 and is critical to regional economic development, infrastructure investment, and workforce growth.

Regional councils provide technical expertise and project management that help communities and businesses secure funding, navigate complex programs, and implement economic development initiatives. Without stable funding, the capacity to lead these efforts is severely limited, impacting the ability to attract investment and move projects forward.

With dedicated funding, Roosevelt Custer can:

- Support housing development by assisting with funding applications and project coordination.
- Strengthen business attraction efforts by helping companies identify sites, incentives, and financing opportunities.
- Expand workforce development initiatives to align talent with employer needs.
- Advance infrastructure and tourism projects that create long-term economic opportunities.

House Bill 1524 is about strategic, long-term investment in regional capacity. The ability to leverage state and federal funds depends on having dedicated staff and expertise to guide the process. Without this support, economic development efforts are fragmented, and opportunities are missed.

I urge the committee to fully fund House Bill 1524 and commit to ongoing support for regional councils to ensure North Dakota remains competitive in attracting and retaining businesses, developing housing solutions, and strengthening its workforce.

Thank you for your consideration.



Ryan Jilek
Executive Vice-President, Stark Development Corporation
Board Member, Roosevelt Custer Regional Council