



# South Central Dakota Regional Council

429 2nd St SW, Suite 208 | PO Box 903 | Jamestown, ND 58402-0903 | Phone: 701-952-8050

**Testimony of Traci Redlin  
South Central Dakota Regional Council  
Support of HB 1524  
January 30, 2025**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on House Bill 1524. My name is Traci Redlin, and I serve as the executive director of South Central Dakota Regional Council, a rural economic development office that has responsibly used revenues to improve the quality of life in our nine counties that make up Region 6 since the 1970's. I am writing to express my concerns about the critical need to build capacity in rural communities to access and effectively utilize funding for their development.

This testimony is submitted in strong support to HB 1524 to seek the state's investment in rural development. I feel this legislation is a critical step in ensuring that North Dakota's regional planning councils receive the necessary funding to support economic development, infrastructure planning, workforce development, and rural capacity-building across our state.

I do not have the staff capacity to go out and apply on behalf of all cities, townships and counties in my region. There would be a HUGE impact if we had the capacity to use our expertise in obtaining these funds for all the communities in our regions that do not have the staff, nor the ability to hire the staff, to pursue these grants and investments for their project. Currently, their only option is to hire expensive consultants who usually are not familiar with the state so there is a huge learning curve even before they start writing grants, etc. If we increase our capacity we would be able to research and apply on behalf of these communities and their projects. Long term it would be beneficial to train their staff along the way so they are able to seek opportunities, apply and receive funding for themselves.

We are asking for a minimum funding allocation of \$500,000 per region per biennium, with a maximum of \$1.5 million, which will be a strategic investment in our communities for years to come. Many rural areas struggle with limited resources for planning and development, and this funding will empower regional councils to provide essential services that would otherwise be out of reach. Additionally, the bill ensures an equitable allocation of funds that accounts for both statewide distribution and the unique needs of each region.

By appropriating \$8 million for regional planning councils for the 2025-2027 biennium, HB 1524 shows that North Dakota is committed to continued economic resilience and growth across North Dakota. Money invested will help our communities in many ways to adapt to challenges, attract new businesses as well as retaining current businesses and build a strong foundation for future generations.

We respectfully urge the committee to support HB 1524, ensuring that regional planning councils are adequately funded to continue playing a pivotal role in the economic development and growth of our rural communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have, provide further details about our programs and impact, or share additional supplemental information if requested.

Respectfully submitted,  
Traci Redlin, Executive Director  
South Central Dakota Regional Council

