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Tuesday, February 4, 2025
House Taxation and Finance Committee

RE: Support for HB 1524

Chairman Headland and committee members,

On behalf of the North Central Planning Council (NCPC), the ND Region 3 planning and development council, I want to express support for House Bill 1524.

NCPC represents six counties: Benson, Cavalier, Eddy, Ramsey, Rolette, and Towner. Region 3 includes two reservations, Spirit Lake Nation and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. There are 42 cities in Region 3, with Devils Lake being the largest, housing a population of 7,192. Among these cities, 35 have populations under 500, and 23 of those have fewer than 100 residents.

In Region 3, only two counties, Cavalier and Ramsey, have full-time economic development staff. Benson County has a Job Development Authority and contracts with NCPC for part-time administration, while Towner County EDC has one part-time staff member. Some communities, like New Rockford and Rolla, have part-time economic development staff. Others, such as Leeds, Maddock, and Minnewaukan, have development boards but no staff.

NCPC works hard to support its region, developers, county commissions, and city councils. Since 2020, we have leveraged several opportunities with regional benefits, including the Department of Commerce Regional Workforce Impact Program, ND Department of Agriculture Regional Livestock Development and Planning Grant, EDA CARES funding, and EDA Revolving Loan Funds. With additional staffing we could increase our assistance to small towns in need of specialized support in infrastructure, workforce, economic and community development, and housing.

We are asking for your support of **HB 1524** to help us create change for the heart of North Dakota, our small towns.

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