

**I am writing to you in support of HB 1524. Living in a small rural community I know that we miss out on many grant opportunities as we have limited staff and time. As much as grants are needed for us to succeed, many times the work involved is too much for smaller organizations and programs.**

### **Why House Bill 1524 Matters for Rural Communities and Regions**

HB 1524 is part of a broader effort to support rural economic development, infrastructure, and essential services. This bill ensures regional councils have the resources to:

- ✓ **Expand Rural Development** – Provides technical expertise for securing and managing funding opportunities through the Economic Development Administration, USDA-RD, HUD - CDBG, Housing Incentive Fund, Bank of North Dakota, ND Parks and Recreation, FEMA, and many more.
- ✓ **Support Housing & Infrastructure** – Aligns with **Senate Bill 2225**, which dedicates \$50M to housing infrastructure, with rural set asides, helping smaller communities navigate complex funding applications, project development, and reporting. Current Housing Incentive Fund legislative proposals range from \$50 to 200 million and the regional councils will assist small towns in accessing these funds.
- ✓ **Enhance Workforce Growth** – Supports programs like the Regional Workforce Impact Fund, assisting communities in putting together projects, developing applications, and reporting as well as leading regional collaborative efforts between industry, small towns, larger communities, career and technology centers, and more. We were fortunate to be a recipient of RWIP funds for our Talent Attraction with the My Town Docuseries.
- ✓ **Improve Essential Services** – Complements **Senate Bill 2228**, which funds rural grocery stores, by ensuring these businesses receive financial and business planning assistance.

### **The Impact of HB 1524**

- ✓ **Secures stable funding** for regional councils, ensuring continued support for rural communities.
- ✓ **Strengthens technical assistance** in developing quality projects, securing grants, project management, and funding administration.
- ✓ **Levels the playing field** for smaller communities competing for state and federal resources.
- ✓ **Provides dedicated project managers** focused on rural development initiatives.

Your support is vital in ensuring this bill moves forward. Thank you for hearing my voice on HB 1524.

Kind Regards,

Laurie Odden

Rugby Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitors Bureau