



House Bill 1524 Testimony: In Favor – DO PASS
February 4, 2025 | 9:30 am | House Finance and Taxation

Chairman Headland and members of the Committee,

Williams County is an active collaborator with the Tri-County Regional Development Council, which serves as a council of local government entities for economic development planning and disseminating financial resources across Divide, McKenzie, and Williams Counties.

HB 1524 would provide all regional development councils, including Tri-County, with much needed supplemental funding to increase their impact on local communities with expanding rural development in a sustainable and fiscally responsible way. In western North Dakota, we are continuing to experience growth as the energy sector continues to innovate. **We rely on organizations such as the Tri-County Regional Development Council to assist with planning and funding for essential rural services, housing, and infrastructure, especially as we continue to see growth and development in the energy sector.**

A core function of a regional development council is to provide local businesses and organizations with the technical expertise to navigate funding programs at the federal level, such as those administered by the Economic Development Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as on the state level, including financial programs available through the Bank of North Dakota and the Housing Incentive Fund. They also serve a key role in securing grant funding that is pivotal for increasing local services, reducing slum and blight, and providing critical local infrastructure. A thriving local economy hinges on the success of businesses both big and small, and the assistance that a regional development council can provide to help with finding the right program, gathering application materials, and following through with program commitments is invaluable.

Today, the Tri-County Regional Development Council is primarily funded by local government contributions and federal grants. **HB 1524 would serve as a stable funding source, ensuring that staff can continue to consistently perform their core functions of securing grants, providing funding administration, and performing project management duties, but also expand their capacity in response to growing community needs.**

Please consider a **DO PASS** for HB 1524. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Cory Hanson
Chairman, Williams County Board of County Commissioners

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