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TESTIMONY OF KRISTIN JAEGER IN SUPPORT OF HB 1524

To the House Finance and Taxation Committee

February 4, 2024

Representatives Monson, Brandenburg, Kempenich, O'Brien, Ostlie, Pyle and Senators Kessel, Meyer, Myrdal, Barta, Lemm:

My name is Kristin Jaeger. I serve as Chair for the Mountrail County Job Development Authority (JDA) and am active in other organizations within my community. There is a lot to be enjoyed when living in a rural area, however, there are also challenges that come along with it.

One of those challenges is access to economic development resources. Because of this, the JDA Board contracts with Souris Basin Planning Council (SBPC) serving Region 2 in order to fulfill our mission to grow Mountrail County's quality of life, enhance economic opportunity, and promote growth and development by providing guidance and resources to entrepreneurs and communities.

Not only does SBPC provide their knowledge, and capabilities in order to administer our loan and grant programs, they provided their expertise to help us develop our strategic plan. Our board has always aimed to be of service to county constituents, however our volunteer members did not have capacity to make the desired impact.

The same skillset that makes SBPC a valuable Regional Council helps make the JDA a valuable resource to the county. Their passion for helping communities and entrepreneurs is evident in the strategies they offer in order to help the JDA create opportunities within the county. It's impossible to know how we would have gathered the needed resources and information on our own. Working with SBPC allows the JDA Board to be efficient and effective.

I have seen first-hand the benefits that a regional council can provide to under-resourced rural areas and the great impact they can have. With additional capacity, I can only imagine how many more communities and organizations regional councils could benefit, which in turn would benefit the entire state of North Dakota. I am happy to share my support for HB 1524 and I urge you to support this critical funding bill for Regional Councils statewide.

Sincerely,


Kristin Jaeger