

**House Energy and Natural Resources Committee**

**Chairman Todd Porter**

**January 23, 2025**

**Testimony**

**Jay Standish, Mayor of New Town, North Dakota**

**HB 1275**

Chairman Porter and members of the Committee:

My name is Jay Standish, and I am the duly elected Mayor of the City of New Town, North Dakota, as well as a lifetime resident and an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes. I am here to express my strong support for HB 1275, which provides a \$5 million appropriation for a natural gas supply infrastructure grant program to the Industrial Commission.

Access to natural gas is a persistent challenge for small, rural communities like New Town. The ability to heat our homes affordably and reliably is not just a convenience; it is a necessity. Unfortunately, the lack of infrastructure to deliver natural gas to our community and others in the region continues to leave us dependent on less efficient, more costly, and often less environmentally friendly energy options.

HB 1275 is a vital step forward. This legislation creates a grant program to fund the installation of natural gas supply infrastructure in cities with populations of no more than 10,000. For communities like New Town, this targeted investment will address a fundamental need, improving energy access while lowering costs for residents and businesses.

New Town offers significant potential for both residential and industrial development. However, the absence of natural gas infrastructure has hindered growth and discouraged investment. Reliable access to natural gas would make our community more attractive for industrial opportunities, such as manufacturing or processing facilities, while also providing an affordable energy source to support residential expansion. By passing HB 1275, the state can help unlock these opportunities, ensuring our community has the tools it needs to thrive.

By advancing this bill, the state has an opportunity to enhance the quality of life for thousands of North Dakotans, reduce energy costs, and make better use of the abundant natural gas resources that are already available. It also supports economic growth in rural areas by making energy more affordable and reliable for small businesses and residents alike.

On behalf of the citizens of New Town, I thank you for considering this legislation and for your commitment to supporting the needs of rural North Dakota. I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of HB 1275, which will ensure that small communities like mine are not left behind when it comes to accessing this essential resource.

Sincerely,

**Jay Standish**

Mayor, City of New Town