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Testimony of Jennifer Dusek in support of SB 2225

To House Political Subdivisions Committee

March 13, 2025

Chairman Longmuir, Vice Chairman Fegley, and Committee Members:

I am Jennifer Dusek, Community Development Director for the City of Grafton.

I'm seeking your consideration to support SB 2225 for \$50 million to help municipalities with the cost of infrastructure related to housing development. Our primary barrier to economic growth in our small community is housing, making this bill pertinent to the growth of rural towns.

Contrary to common belief, our small towns are not dying. Grafton, rural town with 4,100 people, anticipates a 4% growth in population within the next decade. Grafton also sees 70% more workers commuting to Grafton to work rather than leaving Grafton to work, indicating that there is nowhere for them to live. Our employers echo the need that lack of housing is what prevents them from attracting and sustaining their workforce. Housing influences every area of economic growth.

Our preliminary estimate to add necessary infrastructure for housing in Grafton was over \$3.5 million. This high cost of infrastructure is a major deterrent to moving forward with housing construction. Our small towns are burdened by increasing costs; however, the support of this bill would allow our rural community to add needed infrastructure for 34 single family lots. Local employers confirm that at least 60 housing units are needed immediately.

A lack of housing has become the chief barrier to progress in our community and is a critical economic development priority. The cost of infrastructure is too great for our rural cities to absorb and still maintain current economic programming.

I urge your support to allocate funding of \$50,000,000 in which \$10,000,000 will be allocated to communities with a population of fewer than 5,000 individuals. Our rural communities need your support.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Dusek, District 19

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