



City of Watford City

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Celebrating 100 Years - 2014
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House Political Subs Committee
North Dakota Legislative Assembly
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND

RE: Letter of Support for Senate Bill 2225

Chairman Longmuir, Vice Chairman Fegley, and Members of the House Political Subs Committee,

I write to you today in strong support of Senate Bill 2225 and its vital role in ensuring that communities across North Dakota have the necessary resources to address their unique housing needs. As a City Planner in western North Dakota, I have seen firsthand the challenges our communities face in attracting and retaining a workforce due to the lack of affordable, permanent housing options. The provisions outlined in SB 2225 are a crucial step toward alleviating these burdens and fostering sustainable economic growth across our state.

In his testimony for this Bill, Governor Kelly Armstrong aptly described the pressing need for housing solutions, emphasizing that "housing is a major obstacle in our efforts to attract and retain a workforce." The \$50 million appropriated in this bill for the Housing for Opportunity, Mobility, and Empowerment (HOME) program represents a bold and necessary investment, leveraging public-private partnerships to generate \$150 million in housing solutions statewide. What makes this initiative particularly effective is its commitment to local decision-making—each community determines the type of housing most needed and partners accordingly to deliver results.

The City of Watford City has repeatedly highlighted how vital programs such as SB2225 are for areas impacted by rapid workforce expansion. McKenzie County, for example, generates an estimated 35-45% of North Dakota Sweet Crude, contributing significantly to state revenues. Yet, the region struggles with some of the highest housing costs in the state, making workforce attraction and, more importantly, retention increasingly difficult.

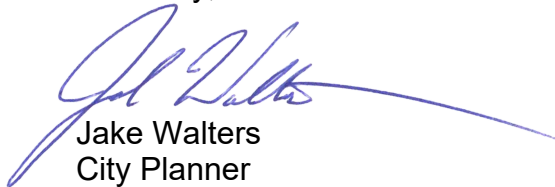
To maximize the impact of SB 2225, I respectfully recommend the following amendment:

Include Grant Caps for Mid-Sized Communities – I recommend establishing grant award caps specifically for communities with populations between 5,001 and 20,000. This would give eligible communities sufficient opportunity to apply for funding and allow them adequate time to identify the most effective use of resources based on their local needs. Communities such as Watford City, Jamestown, Minot AFB, Wahpeton, Devils Lake, and Valley City would particularly benefit from this adjustment, enabling them to better address housing shortages and meet increasing workforce demands.

North Dakota's long-term economic success is directly tied to the availability of quality, affordable housing. Senate Bill 2225 is a critical step in addressing this challenge, and with the recommended amendment, it can provide even greater flexibility and impact for communities such as ours.

Thank you for your consideration and your leadership in advancing housing solutions for North Dakota. I appreciate the opportunity to express my support for SB 2225.

Sincerely,



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