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March 12, 2025

RE: Support for SB 2390

Representative Longmuir and members of the Political Subdivisions Committee:

On behalf of the North Central Planning Council (NCPC), the ND Region 3 planning and development council, I want to express support for SB 2390.

North Dakota Region 3 includes six counties: Benson, Cavalier, Eddy, Ramsey, Rolette, and Towner and two reservations, Spirit Lake Nation and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. There are 42 cities in Region 3, of which 36 have populations under 1000. All these communities would be eligible to apply to the Rural Catalyst Grant Program and benefit for the opportunities it could provide in art and culture, community and economic development, education, and health and wellness.

There are three communities in Region 3 with populations just over 1,000 people including Rolla with 1,223, Cando with 1,117, and New Rockford 1,361. These are the population centers for their respective counties with services such as clinics, hospitals, dentists, grocery stores and support our agriculture industry. These communities could benefit from the Rural Catalyst Grant Program if the population limit were increased to 1,500.

In a recent survey by the Regional Councils projects identified in Region 3 include a new grocery store in the closed Edmore school, handicapped accessible playground/park equipment in Crary, a new ambulance for the Leeds Ambulance Association, rehabilitating a historic building on main street Rolla for retail space and housing, and repurposing a vacant building in New Rockford into a community building for offices, retail space and meeting space. Multiple communities have a need for childcare expansion, road improvements, replacing aging sewer lines, and pool improvements. Other items include rebuilding an outdoor theater, splashpads, community centers and a business incubator.

The Rural Catalyst Grant Program will remove the barrier of competition against larger cities and provide opportunities to the very small rural towns.

Thank you for your consideration and support for **SB 2390**.

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