

Testimony of Briselda Hernandez Herrera in support of SB 2390
To the House Political Subdivisions
Thursday, March 13, 2025

Chairman Longmuir, Vice Chairman Fegley, and Committee Members,

My name is Briselda Hernandez Herrera, and I am the Executive Director of Souris Basin Planning Council (SBPC). SBPC serves a seven-county region comprised of Bottineau, Burke, McHenry, Mountrail, Pierce, Renville, and Ward counties.

I come before you today in support of SB 2390 with an amendment.

First, I would like to acknowledge and express gratitude for the support and advocacy that rural communities have received during this legislative session. **Last month, the House passed [HB 1524](#) which allocates funding to regional councils.** With fewer than half of North Dakota's counties having local economic development organizations and only 19 small towns employing part- or full-time development staff, **this bill is an important step toward strengthening rural capacity.**

While HB 1524 is intended to provide the "people power" needed to develop and implement community and economic development projects, **SB 2390 will ensure the necessary funding is available to bring these projects to life.** SB 2390 is designed to benefit rural communities with populations of **up to 8,500** that may not qualify for other programs and/or that need additional funding support. A population of 8,500 will ensure that communities like Bottineau, New Town, Rugby, Stanley, Surrey, and Velva have access to this funding. Additionally, SB 2390 **encourages collaboration among communities and organizations** by involving regional councils in the process.

I recommend the following amendment to SB 2390 – *Fifty percent of all monies in the fund not used for travel, per diem, and related expenses must be specifically allocated for distribution to communities with a population of fewer than one thousand five hundred.* This will include 20 additional communities (Garrison, Mapleton, Surrey, Bowman, Park River, New Rockford, Burlington, Washburn, Larimore, Cavalier, Rolla, Ellendale, Thompson, Cando, Velva, Linton, Hettinger, Crosby, New Salem, Kindred).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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