



Letter of Support – SB 2030

Tuesday, January 21st, 2025

Chairman Sorvaag and Members of the Senate Appropriations - Education and Environment Division,

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 2030 and urge expanded investments into programs and incentives that promote the development of diverse, affordable and long-term housing solutions.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. Many regions across North Dakota face significant housing challenges, including lack of income-aligned housing and a diverse housing stock. These challenges directly correlate to our state's workforce challenges. Access to diverse, affordable housing stock is pivotal aspect to addressing our state's workforce environment – as we continue efforts to further attract and retain individuals, we must ensure we have adequate long-term housing for them and their families.

In a recent Fargo-Moorhead Regional housing study, it is estimated that by 2032 Fargo, West Fargo and Horace will need an additional 11,800 units to meet the growing of our region. Additionally, the study states that while construction of these units is feasible based on existing levels of production, the cost of these new homes will be out of reach for most residents. In 2022, new construction homes were sold or appraised on average at \$425K and less than 30% of the region's residents can afford homes at these prices. As North Dakota continues to grow, we must make strategic public-private investments to address housing shortages in urban and rural communities across the state. As this Legislative Assembly considers this bill and other proposal related to housing – we urge enhanced investments into housing development to incentivize the additional production of housing units to address our growing population and vibrant economy.

Additionally, we would urge strategic investments to support some of the most vulnerable members of our community. Homelessness remains a challenge throughout several communities across the state and many across the nation. In North Dakota, the annual count of homeless individuals has increased more than 26% over the past four years. State investments coupled with local public and private programmatic and financial support, are fundamental to creating community-based solutions. These solutions can be tailored to the unique challenges of each community and augment their strategies to support the unhoused population throughout our state.

Housing is vital to building strong and stable communities – it is central to addressing our state's workforce environment. We encourage this committee to make significant investments to address housing availability and affordability – ultimately providing North Dakotan's access to diverse, affordable, and long-term housing options. These investments will directly support North Dakota and ensure the continued growth and prosperity of our state.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce