

Testimony Presented on SB 2030 to the

Senate Appropriations – Education and Environment Division
Senator Ronald Sorvaag, Chairman

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City of Fargo

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

As Director of Planning at the City of Fargo, and as Director of Public Health for Fargo and Cass County, we submit this testimony in support of SB 2030. Our respective offices administrate programs and community services that are dependent on the strategic work of the North Dakota Housing Finance Agency (NDHFA). We collaborate with and are dependent of the positive impacts of the Housing Incentive Funds that reach our community. The individual families that are supported by the direct navigation and support of the school districts impacts our citizens as we coordinate housing needs and services. Collectively as government entities, we work with a holistic set of programs to ensure citizens have a roof to sleep under to combat the challenges of poverty.

In 2022, the Planning Office with Beyond Shelter Inc, conducted a market needs study to determine the shortfall of subsidized apartment units that are needed for 0-80% Area Median Income. As a community we are on a trend to *underdeliver* 3,544 units by 2030. This means current needs plus projected shortfall equates to 644 **new** units a year in order to have enough units to house everyone with less than 80% AMI. For a family of three, the current calculation for 80% AMI equals to \$76,250 a year.

In 2018 through private and public funds, the community stood up a program to divert people out of homelessness, led by Presentation Partners in Housing and Southeastern North Dakota Community Action Agency. Through the use of housing navigators and a coordinated system many people are helped and supported in housing. However, the over dependence on federal and philanthropic funds has left a gap in service needs to support people who fall through the system. The Fargo-Moorhead community is working diligently for a regional systemwide response through leaders like the FM Homeless Coalition to end Homelessness, United Way, Churches United, Dakota Medical Foundation and FM Area Foundation. We know however that it takes a unified effort and government leadership to support that strategic framework and vision. NDHFA has helped provide that leadership and guidance for a greater collective to ensure we are working in a system wide approach and to ensure our policies are not conflicting.

Historically our dependence on federal funds to supply affordable housing has been our primary answer for housing supply. However, these funds are increasingly difficult to utilize in meeting the needs. We have learned through the administration of these funds, the combination of federal, state, and local funds along with private and philanthropic helps provide a robust community response to support our vulnerable populations. Supporting SB 2030, and the one time allocation of funds will help us get ahead of the trends.

The City of Fargo strongly encourages your committee to recommend “Do Pass” for this bill.