

SB 2018  
Letter of Support  
Senate Appropriations - Government Operations Division Public Hearing  
January 15, 2025 2:00 PM  
Red River Room - ND State Capitol

Dear Chairman Bekkedahl and members of the committee,

My name is Sandra Larson and I am a proud volunteer for the community of Sheyenne, North Dakota. I strongly support funding the grant programs administered by the Department of Commerce.

I was taught to volunteer for my community as soon as I was old enough to pour coffee at a fundraiser. Now, as a civil engineer working on community projects across the region, I see that projects are most successful when they have community support. Projects the people of Sheyenne have been dreaming of for a generation were made possible by the Rural Workforce Housing Grant and Rural Slum and Blight Removal Grant. With \$117,300 from two grants, we have torn down five dilapidated structures, moved in a donated three bedroom home, put a new roof on an essential business, are restoring an apartment building, and are offering a free lot for building a new home in a prime location. This investment is not only giving our community a facelift, it's expanding the tax base and allowing people to move to our town. Before these projects, there were no apartments for rent or houses for sale in Sheyenne. Now, five of seven families interested in building a home or moving to Sheyenne are from out of state! As a mighty city of 178, this interest is a big deal. We are working to create workforce housing availability and the Department of Commerce is making that possible.

The hard working people who make up the Department of Commerce select projects that put rural communities on the path to growth and resiliency. The grant application process is strict, and each expense is scrutinized. Not a penny is wasted, and the grant projects we do in Sheyenne invest the funds right back into our community whenever possible, supporting local contractors, the hardware store, and lumber yard. 93% of our Rural Workforce Housing Grant money stayed in Eddy County. Being in favor of this bill means being in favor of creating this opportunity for the 392 towns with populations under 10,000. That's 98% of our communities. Thank you for investing in rural North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Sandra Larson  
Sheyenne GRIT