

Amie Vasichек  
PO Box 505  
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January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Chairman Wanzek and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

Re: SB 2225

My name is Amie Vasichек, and I have had the honor of serving as the City Auditor of Lakota for close to 16 years. Additionally, I am a proud board member of the Red River Regional Council Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO), which I have served on for the past two years and Chair of the Nelson County JDA. Today, I am here to provide my **support** for the proposed **Senate Bill 2225**.

As you are aware, housing is the foundation of thriving communities. However, for rural areas like Lakota, the lack of adequate housing and cost of essential infrastructure continues to be one of the greatest barriers to growth and sustainability. Rural communities are not only the backbone of our state’s agricultural economy but also home to families, small businesses, and essential workers who keep these areas vibrant.

SB 2225 aims to provide communities like Lakota with the opportunity to expand infrastructure in support of potential homebuyers without significantly increasing special assessments on the property. The cost of building a home is already incredibly high, and adding further financial burdens to homeowners makes the dream of homeownership unattainable for many.

Recently, Lakota was honored to be the first community to build two “Spark Homes” through the Housing Incentive Fund. The project was an incredible success, with both homes selling even before construction was complete. As a result, the new Spark Home owners vacated their previous Lakota residences, creating opportunities for new families to move into town—and that’s exactly what happened! This project would not have been possible without the support of the Red River CHDO and Lisa Rotvold, whose efforts made these homes a reality. SB 2225 holds the potential to help more communities like Lakota access the funding needed to create additional affordable housing opportunities.

Moreover, this funding aligns with the state’s broader goals of strengthening rural areas and ensuring all North Dakotans have access to safe and affordable housing. By providing targeted funds for infrastructure upgrades, the state can unlock the potential of rural communities, fostering long-term prosperity for residents and ensuring these towns remain vital contributors to our state’s economy.

While I appreciate the funding allocations proposed in this bill, I recommend increasing the funding level for communities with populations under 5,000. North Dakota has 84 communities within the 500 to 5,000 population range, compared to only 6 communities with populations between 5,001 and 20,000. Adjusting the allocations to provide \$20 million for populations under 5,000 and \$10 million for populations between 5,001 and 20,000 would have a greater impact and ensure a more equitable distribution of resources across the state.

I urge you to recognize the importance of this investment and support SB 2225. With your help, we can ensure that rural North Dakota remains a place where families can thrive, businesses can grow, and communities can sustain themselves for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Amie Vasichek

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