

Senate Bill 2225
Sen. Brad Bekkedahl
Senate Appropriations - Government Operations Division
Sen. Terry Wanzek, Chair
Monday, January 27, 2025, 2:00 PM
Red River Room, State Capitol

Good afternoon, Chairman Wanzek and members of the Government Operations Committee. I am Kelly Armstrong, and I have the honor of serving as North Dakota's 34th governor. During my campaign, as I visited with thousands of constituents from both urban and rural areas of our state, it was clear housing is a major obstacle in our efforts to attract and retain a workforce.

Our budget includes nearly \$105 million to address housing availability and affordability. Today, we are focusing on the \$50 million for a new Department of Commerce solution to address the housing needs through a public-private partnership structure called Housing for Opportunity, Mobility and Empowerment, or HOME. By using local and private sector matches, this will create a \$150 million investment in housing solutions across North Dakota.

What is different about the HOME fund is it recognizes each local community has unique needs to fit their housing shortage. Some need single family homes, others need apartments or duplexes. Communities looking for homeless shelter solutions also could access these funds.

This plan is straightforward and easy to understand and implement. A community decides the type of housing they need and which contractor they want to build the project. The

community, state and developer each put up 1/3 of the cost for the infrastructure. Then, the contractor builds the project.

In coordination with the Bank of North Dakota, we are working on a policy change to go hand-in-hand with this by streamlining financing for housing that costs more to build than it appraises at when finished. The bank program will have no budget impact but will allow us to deploy the money we are requesting to address a pressing need.

We believe the HOME fund changes the status quo – it is not a one-size-fits-all program.

This is a solution that will empower local communities to make decisions that best fit their needs. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to address you today. I ask for a do pass on Senate Bill 2225. I would be happy to answer any questions.