



North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives
3201 Nygren Drive NW • P.O. Box 727 • Mandan, ND 58554-0727



ND
Living

Phone: 701.663.6501 or 800.234.0518
Fax: 701.663.3745 www.ndarec.com

January 17, 2025

To: North Dakota Senate's Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee
From: Josh Kramer, executive vice president and general manager, NDAREC
RE: **Support of Senate Bill 2097**

Chairman Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture and Veteran Affairs Committee,

On behalf of the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) and its members, I'd like to express support for Senate Bill (SB) 2097.

Our association represents 17 electric distribution cooperatives and five generation and transmission cooperatives that generate, transmit and distribute electricity across the state of North Dakota. For several decades, we have operated one of the most successful rural development centers in the country, successfully leveraging more than \$700 million to provide financial and technical assistance for business enterprises and community economic development projects — 91% of which are still operational today. These projects support the development of small businesses and advance rural communities in the areas of health care, child care, rural food access, housing, infrastructure and much more.

We, and the cooperatives we represent, are dedicated to improving the quality of life for rural people and rural places. Though we've had much success, finding capital and financial assistance for projects in small rural communities is a growing challenge. The proposed rural community endowment fund would be a step in the right direction. This fund would assist with essential community projects that help maintain livable rural communities, populations and the workforce required to match the opportunities before us.

Much of the opportunity we see today is due, in part, to the groundwork, infrastructure, development and ideas put in place years or generations ago. Concepts such as these lead to long-term prosperity and growth, connect people and communities, enable trade, improve livability and create opportunity. This fund could be transformational and provide long-lasting economic and social impacts for generations to come.

NDAREC urges a "Do Pass" recommendation on SB 2097.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 