



Rural areas of the state have lost a majority of their essential services over the past few decades. Schools, fire departments, emergency services, grocery stores, cafes, service stations, etc., are all core services that used to be available in most communities, which are now only available in a handful with a population under 1,000.

The communities that still have these services depend on them to retain their current residents. While schools are funded using public money, grocery stores and other services are not and are as important for rural communities to survive. There have been multiple studies conducted that show the two most important services in a rural community are a school and a grocery store. The lack of one or both of these leads to rapid population loss and most often the loss of the other and their employees.

Food deserts, areas where people have to drive at least 30 minutes to buy food, are becoming more common in North Dakota with the dwindling population in rural areas. This bill would provide a much-needed source of funding to support creative solutions to help solve this problem and to support current grocery stores that are struggling to keep their doors open.

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