

The idea of this “Rural” Catalyst Fund is a slap in the face to rural communities in this state. As a volunteer grant writer for Sheyenne, my hometown of 178, I see nothing in this bill for “rural” representation. Besides, it just isn’t a wise appropriation of tax payer money. Here’s five reasons why you should forget about SB 2390 and focus on real solutions for rural North Dakota.

- 1. Where is the rural representation on the committee?** Sheyenne is in Region 3. The North Central Planning Council is in Devils Lake. Why would Devils Lake give money to projects in Sheyenne when their own community, population 7135, would qualify?
- 2. Unfair advantage.** 98% of communities in North Dakota have populations under 8500. 86% are under 1000. Cities in the 1001-8500 range, like Devils Lake, have paid grant writers. I volunteer to write grants for my small town in my limited spare time. I can’t compete with this. Small towns should not be pitted against their larger neighbors.
- 3. Prioritizing existing projects** ignores the need for future planning to keep rural North Dakota going. If we didn’t already have the money to start a big project, this fund doesn’t do us any good.
- 4. One time appropriation.** This ignores the definition of catalyst. A catalyst starts or speeds up a chemical reaction WITHOUT being used up in the reaction. The bill does not mention the fund being an endowment. Is the fund sustainable? A responsible use of taxpayer money would be a rural endowment that grows over time with responsible management.
- 5. Matching funds.** The argument that organizations need to show “skin in the game” upsets me the most. What do you think these communities have been doing for generations? Bake sales. Fundraisers. Service projects. A few hundred dollars at a time is often raised by utilizing HUNDREDS of hours of volunteer time. These volunteers are council members, church board members, volunteer firefighters, and full time workers if they aren’t already retired. So when a make or break community project comes up that costs \$300,000, guess how many pieces of peach kuchen Sheyenne would have to bake to raise \$100,000? Be real.

Please DO NOT PASS SB 2390. If you have any questions, please call me at (701) 399-6203.

Sincerely,

Sandra Larson  
Sheyenne, ND  
58374