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**Testimony of Teran Doerr**  
**Bowman County Development Corporation**  
**Opposition to SB 2035**  
**January 13, 2025**

Chairwoman Larson, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

This testimony is submitted in strong opposition to SB 2035. We respectfully request that rural economic development offices and tourism organizations remain eligible for charitable gaming funds, as our work provides essential, community-wide benefits that align with the intent of this legislation. I urge you to consider the broad impact of our programs, which strengthen the social, economic, and overall well-being of our rural communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on Senate Bill 2035. My name is Teran Doerr, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Bowman County Development Corporation, a rural economic development office that has responsibly used charitable gaming revenues to improve the quality of life in our community for over 25 years. I am here to express my concerns about the proposed amendments to the definitions of public-spirited organizations and to oppose changes that could unintentionally harm economic development and tourism organizations.

We are committed to using charitable gaming funds for charitable purposes. We keep our expenses to a minimum, 41%, according to our last report, in order to ensure that charities receive the maximum benefit from these funds. Our office carefully structures our gaming program to prioritize transparency and accountability, ensuring that funds are distributed responsibly and benefit the broader community. Specifically, we have used charitable gaming funds to support:

- **Childcare programs** to address critical shortages in rural areas, ensuring families have access to affordable childcare.
- **Youth and adult education programs** that provide career exploration, workforce training, and skill development opportunities.
- **Community development projects** that improve public spaces and enhance the quality of life for residents.
- **25% of our charitable gaming revenue** is allocated to the Bowman County Historical Museum, which preserves and promotes our community's rich history and cultural heritage.
- **A portion of the funds** is directed to the Rhame Fire Department, helping to support their lifesaving emergency services and ensuring our rural community remains safe.
- **We also provide funding** to the Bowman American Legion, supporting their efforts to honor and serve our veterans and their families.

Additionally, we established the **Play It Forward Fund** to extend the reach of our charitable gaming dollars further. This grant program, managed by a subcommittee that includes community members, has supported projects such as:

- New playground equipment for local parks.
- Additions to a veterans' memorial wall.
- HVAC system upgrades for the Rhame American Legion meeting hall.
- Flags and crosses for the Bowman American Legion to mark veterans' graves at our cemetery.
- Girls Circle Group Program, fostering self-esteem and connection among young girls by creating a safe, supportive environment.
- Council on Aging Meals on Wheels Program, ensuring that seniors in our community receive nutritious meals and regular wellness checks.

These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to broadening the impact of charitable gaming funds across the community. Because of how we administer these funds, many charities receive the benefit. Our organization has the mission and infrastructure to ensure that funds are distributed efficiently and equitably to meet diverse community needs.

While I agree that charitable gaming funds should be used for charitable purposes, I believe the language in SB 2035 is too subjective and creates unnecessary uncertainty. Eliminating an organization solely based on its title fails to consider the mission and charitable work being done by that organization to address critical community needs. Many economic development and tourism organizations have responsibly managed these funds to address critical community needs and improve quality of life.

**We respectfully urge the committee to oppose SB 2035 to ensure that charitable gaming funds continue to support economic development and tourism organizations that play a vital role in strengthening our rural communities.**

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have, provide further details about our programs and impact, or share additional supplemental information if requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Teran Doerr, Executive Director  
Bowman County Development Corporation