



**RE: SUPPORT \$8 MILLION FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY  
AMENDMENT TO ND DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE APPROPRIATIONS BILL 1018**

Dear Legislators:

My name is Duane Bowman, President of Dakota Western Bank. I am writing in support of an amendment to HB 1018 that would fund Regional Councils across the state.

Our business primarily serves the southwest corner of North Dakota. I have been a long-term supporter of economic and community development efforts in our region. As a business that greatly relies on the growth of our communities, these efforts are critical. The communities in our region are mostly rural and have continued to see population decline over the last several census counts. Population decline puts a larger burden on taxpayers and makes it more difficult for our city and county leaders to continue forward with growth investments in our communities. I firmly believe that supporting efforts locally through regional efforts will provide the most significant benefit for our region, and other regions across the state.

Throughout my 25-year banking career, I have first-hand worked with our regional council on a number of projects. This partnership resulted in stronger projects by providing additional funding sources, business plan development and enhancement, and technical support to new and expanding businesses. All of these resulted in stronger projects, more successful businesses, regional economical boosts, strengthened community growth, and additional job creation.

When looking at the purpose and objective outlined in the North Dakota Century Code from fifty years ago, the need of *“consistent statewide policy for planning, economic development programs, operations, coordination, and related cooperative activities of state/local governments to resolve issues and problems transcending individual jurisdictions”* still exists today. When the state rolled out the much needed RWIP (Regional Workforce Impact Program), many communities lacked the staffing to apply and to implement these programs. The SWCTE (Southwest Area Career and Technical Education Academy) is an extremely valuable asset to our region but needs partners like Regional Councils to help get the resources of the CTE out to the communities. The Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library is going to provide a huge boost to the tourism industry in Southwest ND and all of the state. Regional Councils will

PO Box D  
Bowman, ND 58623  
701-523-5616

PO Box 909  
Hettinger, ND 58639  
701-567-4511

PO Box 69  
Rhame, ND 58651  
701-279-5534

PO Box 7  
Scranton, ND 58653  
701-275-6300

serve as an integral part of growing and developing the tourism plan for this exciting addition to our state.

Regional Councils are a needed and trusted network for providing regional economic and community development. The purpose for establishing the Regional Councils fifty years ago still exists today. Providing consistent and long-term funding will allow the Regional Councils to adequately staff their offices while ensuring growth to economic and community development and tourism throughout or regions and state.

Please support providing a long-term funding mechanism for Regional Councils.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Duane Bowman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the "n" of "Bowman".

Duane Bowman  
President/CEO  
Dakota Western Bank  
Bowman, ND 58623