

TESTIMONY OF JENNIFER FEIST, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, VALLEY CITY-BARNES COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, VALLEY CITY, ND

HB 1018

SENATOR TERRY M. WANZEK
Senate Appropriations – Government Operations Division

Senator Wanzek and Members of the Committee,

Please accept this testimony in support of \$8 Million that would be provided in equal amounts to the eight Regional Councils across the State. The \$8 Million was originally part of HB 1018.

As the Director of Economic Development, I have worked with South Central Dakota Regional Council, Jamestown and Lake Agassiz Regional Council, Fargo on economic development projects.

Communities are beneficiaries of Regional Council technical and financial support that are interrelated with other agencies that are working together with the same end goal.

In Barnes County alone, we have received assistance with:

1. Job creation
2. I-94 Regional Development Corridor, an industrial park located off Exit 294
3. Primary sector industrial development
4. Small business development
5. Low-income housing
6. Water supply systems
7. Childcare facilities
8. Bridge repair
9. Flood mitigation and flood buyouts
10. EDA grant funds utilized to construct the Regional Technology Center, a business technology center for new and growing businesses

The value of the technical assistance that communities receive from Regional Councils cannot be overstated. Regional Council staff work diligently to ensure State and Federal funding requirements are met, which vary greatly from one agency to another. In certain cases, such as EDA and CDBG/CDLF funds, communities must apply for funds through the Regional Council. Communities also do not have the professional staff to administer programs, which can be difficult and time consuming.

Testimony offered by Maria Effertz outlined the many programs and services offered by and administered by the Division of Community Services, Department of Economic Development & Finance, ND Department of Commerce. Regional Councils provide the critical linkage from Federal and State programs and services to the communities, especially to the many smaller communities across the State. Communities can access funds for basic infrastructure, specifically water and sewer systems, with assistance from the Regional Councils.

Please support the \$8 Million that was originally included in HB 1018 and provide financial support to the Regional Councils. Thank you.