

HOUSE BILL NO. 1524

Introduced by

Representatives Monson, Brandenburg, Kempenich, O'Brien, Ostlie, Pyle

Senators Kessel, Meyer, Myrdal, Barta, Lemm

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 54-40.1 of the North Dakota
2 Century Code, relating to the funding of regional planning councils; and to provide an
3 appropriation.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 54-40.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is created
6 and enacted as follows:

7 **Biennial work plan - Funding.**

- 8 1. A regional council shall prepare a biennial work plan. The work plan must:
- 9 a. Include proposed actions, targeted outcomes, and an itemized budget.
 - 10 b. Align with the comprehensive economic development strategy for the region
11 developed with input from regional stakeholders, including members of the
12 legislative assembly.
 - 13 c. Be approved by the regional council's executive board before submission.
 - 14 d. Address issues of rural capacity, including business development, zoning and
15 land use planning, grant writing and technical assistance, housing development,
16 child care support, workforce development, infrastructure planning, tourism and
17 placemaking initiatives, disaster recovery planning, and community leadership
18 development.
- 19 2. A regional council shall submit:
- 20 a. Copies of the biennial work plan no later than twelve months before the
21 beginning of each biennium to the commissioner of the department of commerce,
22 the governor, and members of the legislative assembly representing the region. A
23 county providing financial support to regional councils shall maintain or exceed
24 the funding to ensure the continuation of regional development efforts.

- 1 b. Reporting metrics detailing program outcomes, expenditures, and other relevant
2 performance measures no later than forty-five days before the end of the
3 biennium to the commissioner of the department of commerce, the governor, and
4 members of the legislative assembly representing the region.
- 5 3. Subject to legislative appropriations, the department of commerce shall provide
6 funding to regional councils to implement the biennial work plan.
- 7 4. Funds may:
- 8 a. Be used to employ individuals or for contractual services to implement the
9 biennial work plan under this section.
- 10 b. Not be used for debt repayment, loans, grants, lobbying, political activities, or
11 unrelated or nonessential expenses, including entertainment, luxury purchases,
12 or projects that do not demonstrate a regional benefit.
- 13 5. Fifty percent of appropriated funding must be allocated equally among the eight
14 regions and fifty percent must be awarded based on a funding formula established
15 jointly by the department of commerce and the association of regional councils.
- 16 6. The funding formula under subsection 5 must be reviewed and amended as necessary
17 every four years and provide equitable allocation of funding for a regional council
18 providing services for multiple service areas or counties.
- 19 7. The department of commerce shall provide to each regional council a minimum
20 allocation of five hundred thousand dollars per region per biennium and a maximum
21 allocation of one million five hundred thousand dollars per region per biennium.

22 **SECTION 2. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE - REGIONAL**

23 **COUNCILS.** There is appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury,
24 not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$8,000,000, or so much of the sum as may be
25 necessary, to the department of commerce for the purpose of funding regional planning
26 councils, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027.