



**Testimony of
Jennifer Feist, Director of Development
Valley City-Barnes County Development Corporation
Valley City, ND**

SB 2018 (In Favor)

On behalf of the Valley City-Barnes County Development Corporation, I am pleased to offer our support of SB 2018 that appropriates funds for the North Dakota Department of Commerce and a transfer to the North Dakota Development Fund. As introduced, SB 2018 included a transfer of \$50 Million to the North Dakota Development Fund, which was reduced to \$30 Million.

I write in support of the \$50 Million transfer to the North Dakota Development Fund and respectfully request funds be appropriated accordingly.

This action is significant and a good investment for several reasons:

1. Investments in rural North Dakota are crucial.
2. Low interest loans and/or grants for non-primary sector businesses will have a significant impact on Main Street businesses that in turn, support primary sector business growth. The President & CEO of one of our companies said (paraphrasing) – Don't ever underestimate the value of community support to companies and their growth. We can't do it alone.
3. Communities must be competitive so that -
 - a. Primary sector companies continue investing in North Dakota thereby deepening their roots here, and
 - b. People choose to live where they work. Excessive commuting and excessive turnover are not acceptable. Valley City simply cannot lose the benefit of our economic development investments.
4. Valley City, as a mid-tier community, has made progress. Growth opportunities exist with our primary sector businesses, some of which are John Deere Seeding Valley City, Malach USA (metal fabrication for OEMs), Atos/Eagle Creek Software Services, Drug Plastics & Glass, TRI W-G Inc. (therapeutic and bariatric tables), Force Manufacturing, Boston Scientific/Preventice (remote heart monitoring), Pembina Pipeline/Alliance Pipeline, and NextEra Energy.
5. We face other challenges of K-12 school facilities, housing, and job opportunities plus costs of infrastructure, repurposing/renovating buildings, permanent flood protection, and much more.
6. Inflationary costs are impacting literally every sector of our community.
7. Loan funds are needed for primary sector companies, which drive community growth. The North Dakota Development Fund complements and supports other funding sources.

The North Dakota Development Fund is a major partner that can provide financial resources that are very much needed in Valley City.

I urge support of SB 2018 and a \$50 Million transfer to the North Dakota Development Fund. Thank you.