

Members of the House Appropriations

March 31, 2025

Re: SUPPORT for 2225 and request providing an amendment for a lookback on qualifying infrastructure

Dear Chairman Vigesaa, Vice-Chairman Kempenich, members of the House Appropriations,

I am writing to express my strong support for 2225 and the 'look back amendment' (referred to in House Political Subs as the Bekkedahl amendment), allowing the North Dakota Department of Commerce to consider a look back on existing infrastructure for the HOME program and to allow them to provide grant funds that spur rooftop creation on credited single family residential infrastructure.

As the Chief Executive Officer of McKenzie Health, I oversee a hospital and healthcare system that employs and contracts nearly 450 healthcare workers, ranging from front office staff and administrative assistants to nurses and highly skilled medical specialists.

One of the most pressing challenges we face in McKenzie County is the severe shortage of affordable housing. With the average sale price of a single-family home exceeding \$450,000, homeownership is out of reach for many of our dedicated healthcare workers. Even our professional staff find it difficult to justify settling in the area when they can get significantly more value for their dollar elsewhere in the state or across the country. Injecting some grant funds into the single-family housing equation will help close that value gap.

This housing crisis has had a profound impact on McKenzie Health. Due to the lack of available and affordable housing, we have been forced to rely heavily on agency staff, often paying two times (or more) the cost of a permanent employee. This not only increases our operational expenses but also presents challenges in maintaining continuity of care for our patients. The high cost of doing business in our region, exacerbated by this forced reliance on temporary staffing, places undue strain on our hospital's financial sustainability.

Passing the lookback amendment to 2225 would be a significant step toward addressing these challenges. By supporting initiatives that expand access to affordable housing, we can create an environment that attracts and retains permanent healthcare professionals. This, in turn, will improve the quality of care for our community, the northwest region of North Dakota and ensure the long-term viability of healthcare services to our region.

I urge you to recommend a DO PASS for 2225, support the lookback amendment and to provide the full appropriation to help create single family rooftops in western North Dakota, making it possible for our healthcare workers to live and thrive in the communities they serve. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter D. Edis

Peter D. Edis, MS, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer

