

Dear Chairman and members of the committee.

My name is Sandra Larson, and I am proud to be from Sheyenne, a town of 178 people in District 14. As an engineer, I spend my limited free time volunteering as a grant writer for Sheyenne. I am strongly in favor of SB 2097 and am asking for you to please consider a do pass.

SB 2097 is great because it's a **one-time appropriation to create a self-sustaining endowment**. If you invest these existing state funds, they will grow over time and always be there. Rural communities need this reliable source of funding.

This endowment fund is one of a kind. Recent rural grants through the Department of Commerce have been offered to cities of 10,000 or less. Towns like Sheyenne are competing against cities like Devils Lake, who have paid grant writers. SB 2097 levels the playing field. The **no match** requirement is a huge benefit. My whole life I've watched volunteers put in hours working fundraisers, dinners, and bake sales, only to raise a few hundred dollars at a time. Grants with match requirements just aren't accessible. With a grant committee made up of rural folks and legislators, there will be fair **oversight**.

In rural ND, we know how to stretch a dollar and support our local businesses. Sheyenne was the recipient of a grant where 93% of the funds went to carpenters, contractors, and businesses located in Eddy County.

Sheyenne is a success story where one grant brought down roadblocks and gave us momentum. Our community is on the path to revitalization. The SB 2097 endowment fund will make this possible for communities across the state.

Thank you for supporting rural North Dakota.

Sincerely,

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