Testimony of Mark Lyman
Economic Development Association of North Dakota
In Support of HB 1524
March 17, 2025

Chair Barta and members of the Senate Industry and Business Committee:

My name is Mark Lyman, and I am the Economic Development Specialist with the Minot Area Chamber EDC as well as a member of the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND). It is in the capacity of an EDND member that I provide testimony today. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1524.

Regional planning councils are essential to economic and community development across the state, particularly in rural areas where local governments often lack the capacity to pursue large-scale initiatives on their own. These councils help communities navigate complex economic challenges, secure funding opportunities, and coordinate long-term strategic planning efforts. By requiring a biennial work plan, HB 1524 ensures that regional councils align their activities with the state's economic development goals while remaining accountable for their performance.

This bill also strengthens regional planning efforts by addressing key issues such as business development, workforce expansion, infrastructure planning, housing, and childcare. These areas are fundamental to economic growth, and without dedicated resources, many communities struggle to attract businesses and retain talent. The funding provided in HB 1524 will enable regional councils to continue providing technical assistance, grant writing support, and other vital services that help North Dakota's communities grow and thrive.

Sustained investment in regional planning councils is a necessary step to support North Dakota's long-term economic success. The $2.4 million appropriation outlined in this bill is a strategic investment in the future of our state, ensuring that communities—large and small—have access to the resources they need to remain competitive. On behalf of EDND, we urge your support for HB 1524 and welcome any questions you may have.