



# LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEETS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

## **NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGIONAL AUTHORITY: URGE CONGRESS TO PROVIDE \$15 MILLION FOR FISCAL 2006**

### **ISSUE:**

Fund the five-state Northern Great Plains Regional Authority at \$15 million, as part of the fiscal 2006 Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. In addition, urge the President to nominate, and the Senate to confirm, Federal and Tribal Co-Chairs, a crucial step in allowing the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority to convene its inaugural meeting.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Northern Great Plains Regional Authority (NGPRA) is a federal-state partnership serving the five-state region of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. Led by a Federal Co-Chair, Tribal Co-Chair and the governor of each participating state, the NGPRA is an intergovernmental partnership designed to facilitate increased coordination and collaboration in a region that has experienced a severe drop in the rate of job creation, business development, economic stability and population growth.

Working with multi-county local development districts, the NGPRA was established in the 2002 Farm bill to serve communities by leveraging public and private sector resources that are focused on basic business development and job skills services, infrastructure development and transportation improvements. Under federal law, 75 percent of funds must be targeted to the most distressed counties and areas and 50 percent of project dollars must be reserved for transportation, telecommunications and basic infrastructure improvements.

At the local level, the NGPRA utilizes the existing network of regional development organizations to coordinate efforts within a multi-county area. As outlined in the enacting legislation, the local development districts are responsible for serving as liaisons between state, local and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, the business community and the public. They are also involved in developing regional economic development strategies, providing technical assistance to local communities and assisting organizations involved with leadership and civic development programs.

The Northern Great Plains represents a unique physical and economic region in North America. While the region is well known for its agricultural capabilities, it has struggled to keep pace with other regions across the country in the diversification of its economy. As a result the region faces high rates of job loss, outmigration and poverty. The Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that 40 percent of the 399 counties in the Great Plains states have seen a continuous decline in population over the past 40 years. As the nation continues to compete in an increasingly global economy, stabilizing population and enhancing job opportunities in the Northern Great Plains is critical to the economic health of the region and the nation.

### **ACTION NEEDED:**

Urge House and Senate members to fund the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority at \$15 million. In addition, ask that they encourage the President to nominate, and the Senate to confirm, a Federal Co-Chair and a Tribal Co-Chair, a crucial step in allowing the Authority to convene its inaugural meeting.

**For more information, contact Amy Linehan at 202.624.8177 or [alinehan@nado.org](mailto:alinehan@nado.org)**

## **DRAFT LETTER TO CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS FROM THE NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS REGION**

Date

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
United States House of Representatives/Senate  
Washington, DC 20515/20510

### **VIA FACSIMILE:**

Dear Representative/Senator [**Last Name**]:

**As appropriators begin work on the FY 2006 Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide \$15 million for the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority.** With these funds the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority, its five members states, and the network of local development districts can begin to apply solutions to the region's long standing economic decline.

The Northern Great Plains represents a unique physical, sociological and economic region in North America. While the region is well known for its agricultural production capabilities, it has struggled keep pace with other regions across the country in the diversification of its economy. As a result the region faces high rates of poverty, job loss and outmigration. Over 40 percent of the counties in the Great Plains have seen continuous decline over the last forty years and non-metro counties in the region nearly lost 223,000 people. In addition, more than half of the counties in the region face an unemployment rate that is 5.6 percent greater than the national average.

Stabilizing the population rate and enhancing job opportunities in the Northern Great Plains is critical to the economic health of the region, its communities and citizens, but without an increased rate of federal investments for initial operations, the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority will be severely hampered in its ability to combat these longstanding issues.

**[INSERT EXAMPLES OF LOCAL NEEDS AND CHALLENGES ]**

Please help us make the new authority a success by including \$15 million for the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority in the FY 2006 Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. This small amount will provide adequate start-up funding for the new federal-state-local partnership.

Sincerely,

Name, Title

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*Members listed alphabetically, rather than by seniority*

*\*Northern Great Plains Region*

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