               The Honorable Sandra Thompson

               Director

               Federal Housing Finance Agency

               400 7th Street, SW

               Washington, DC 20219

Re: Federal Home Loan Bank Mission RFI (<https://www.fhfa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/FHLBank-Mission-FRFI-2024.pdf>)

Dear Director Thompson,

I am writing to you about the Federal Home Loan Bank Mission RFI, as the Federal Home Loan Bank mission is very important to the work we do in our community as a community bank. I work for North Shore Bank, a $500 million community bank that serves the Duluth, Minnesota, Superior, Wisconsin, and the surrounding communities. At North Shore Bank, we are the area’s leading 1-4 family mortgage lender, from first time homebuyers to vacation rentals. We also provide financing for multi-family housing projects and other business lending needs through our commercial lending team.

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines is supports our lending into our communities for both businesses and consumers. We have worked with multiple housing organizations in the community to secure grants from the FHLB to provide affordable housing options in the area. The FHLB has been instrumental in providing us an option to sell our 1-4 family home loans through the Mortgage Partnership Finance Program, allowing us to provide more housing funding by freeing up room on our balance sheet, and providing a servicing retained option, so we can continue to service our clients loan payments. In recent times, the FHLB has been helpful for providing funding options that meet North Shore Bank’s needs, at reasonable terms, and ease of access to allow us to continue to lend into our community to provide economic growth.

I support the current mission of the FHLBs and encourage the FHFA to work with Congress if the agency wants to change the FHLB system’s mission. Changes to this mission, could have unintended consequences to many community bank’s services that they offer their communities.

Sincerely,

Matthew C. Gottwald

Senior Vice President, Operations