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Dear Chairman Vig, Vice Chairman Anderson, and Secretary/Treasurer Brewer:

This letter is written in support of the Diversity Foundation application to you for support for many needed projects. Having worked with Lyle Rustad and the Diversity Foundation since 1998, as the City Manager of Winona, Minnesota, **I am aware of the long standing desire of the Foundation to transfer, digitize, edit and archive its massive collection of interviews and filming of Native elders and events across southern Minnesota, the Dakotas, and Manitoba, Canada. I am aware of and have supported efforts to develop sustainable housing, potable water, outreach efforts for children, energy, and health care improvements on reservations.**

Winona has supported efforts to connect its citizens with members of Dakota tribal lands though City of Winona sponsored support and the Winona/Dakota Unity Alliance. My role as City Manager was to serve as the connecting point between the City and its citizens that constituted the membership of the Alliance. Reconciliation has been the underlying basis for our involvement and the leaders of this connection have been many Dakota elders over the years. **In 2004, the City of Winona & the Diversity Foundation organized Winona's first "Great Dakota Homecoming & Gathering" (now entering it's 12th annual)**

The glue of this entire effort has been Lyle Rustad and the Diversity Foundation. I have personally traveled with him to several Dakota reservations and have witnessed his filming efforts. It would be a terrible injustice not to codify the Foundation's material collection for posterity and in doing so preserve the images and voices of so many Dakota Elders.

I support the Foundation's proposal to you and hope that you will consider its meaning not only to the Dakota people, but, also, to the people of the United States and Canada, if not the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric B. Sorensen".

Eric B. Sorensen
Retired City Manager
Winona, Minnesota
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