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Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing on behalf of the Adult Farm Management/Farm Management Education program which is part of the Department of Career and Technical Education bill being discussed. As an agricultural lender, I have, and continue to work with the financial and statistical data that this program provides. Not only have I seen it benefit individual farm and ranch operations firsthand, but also many other statewide business sectors.

The overview state statistics show year to year industry trends and comparative information for operations of different size and scale broken down by regions. As many born and raised in North Dakota know, our agriculture commodities produced are numerous, and the challenges of growing, harvesting, financing, and marketing them are just as diverse. As citizens and consumers of many of these products, we all should be concerned with ensuring the best and long-term success of agriculture in this state and across the nation. Agriculture is one of the largest and longest standing state and national economies and when agriculture does well, main street does well too.

I work most closely with the program based out of Bismarck State College and their instructor Kyle Olson. One of the greatest aspects of this program is that it is a financially disinterested third-party to each member it serves because of the grant funding it receives. This program is imperative to many producers and industry leaders in urban areas, but especially in smaller rural communities. I know and appreciate all the time and effort put in annually by program instructors for the mutual success of producers we serve. I truly believe that those in this program know their business better than their peers because of the honest feedback and real-life application brought to the table. They make better and more informed decisions because of this learning opportunity which continues to add to the prosperity of our state.

Both of my parents are involved in public and private state education. One piece of advice I received from them, and carry with me to this day, is that a good education never goes to waste and is something no one can ever take from you. These statements apply heavily to this program and why it is so important to support this bill. If we do not educate the future of our state agriculturalists, I ask who will?

Now, more than ever, this program is vital to help producers that are struggling financially, mentally, and emotionally. They have seen several back to back years of depressed market prices that have brought on operational losses and highly stressed financial positions. These program instructors are not just financial educators, but wear many hats to counsel, coach, and guide those we call friends, family, and neighbors through the toughest of times. Let's take the chance to support those supporting others.

I would like to close with the following quote by Nelson Mandela— "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".

Thank you for your consideration and support of the Senate Appropriation Committee—Bill 2019 during the 67<sup>th</sup> North Dakota Legislative Assembly.