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**Testimony of
Matt Perdue
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
Senate Appropriations Committee
January 28, 2021**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 2040. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union's (NDFU) members.

NDFU has a neutral position on SB 2040. We believe that bonding represents a major opportunity to invest in critical infrastructure across our state. We, first and foremost, appreciate the committee's consideration of bonding to meet our state's needs. SB 2040 is an important part of the ongoing discussion on a final bonding package and includes provisions of interest to NDFU's members.

NDFU supports the inclusion of \$115 million for county and township infrastructure and additional funding for road and bridge infrastructure projects. Wet conditions, flooding and increased traffic have created significant stress on and, in some cases, overwhelmed rural roads and bridges. This has proven costly for farmers and ranchers, causing delays during the busy planting and harvest season. In some extreme cases, fields and pastures have become inaccessible at times.

According to the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota's county and township roads require a \$9.3 billion investment over the next 20 years. We appreciate the legislature's commitment to addressing those needs through Operation Prairie Dog during the 2019 session. However, the state's current fiscal challenges prevent the promise of Operation Prairie Dog from being fulfilled in the near term. SB 2040 meets those challenges with bold investment in county and township infrastructure.

NDFU also urges the committee to provide \$50 million for establishment of the Agricultural Products Development Center (APDC) in a final bonding package. Public agricultural research is critical to the success of family farmers and ranchers. North Dakota State University's (NDSU) agricultural research is currently conducted in severely outdated facilities. NDSU's crop science and meats research, along with the Northern Crops Institute, should be housed in a facility that allows them to continue providing world-class research and promotion. The APDC will deliver a strong return on investment.





We recognize the bonding discussion is ongoing and complex. We appreciate the committee's efforts to meet the state's growing needs in a challenging fiscal environment. NDFU believes county and township infrastructure and the APDC are important pieces to that puzzle.

Thank you for your consideration.

