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Testimony of Doug Goehring
Agriculture Commissioner
Senate Bill 2171
Senate Appropriations Committee
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Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring and I am here to support Senate Bill 2171.

SB 2171 is a bill to transfer the North Dakota Trade Office (NDTO) from the Department of Commerce and into the Department of Agriculture. NDTO is designed to provide support and assistance to all North Dakota companies, industries, and exporters. The recommendation from the executive branch was to split NDTO into two entities but this is not an agency of the state. NDTO is not an extension of any state department, rather, it is a stand alone organization with a contract for service. NDTO is a public private partnership with the state agency providing oversight of the contract.

In recent years, we have seen how budget cuts have created an environment of uncertainty and anxiety. The proposal to split NDTO into

two entities only plants more doubt with the members, North Dakota companies and exporters. SB 2171, in contrast, keeps NDTO whole and includes funding at the base level which keeps the board focused on assisting and supporting all North Dakota companies and exporters.

We manage over 500 contracts for service in a biennium with entities as varied as ombudsman, credit counselors, and mediators, to Market News, Wildlife Services, and numerous contracts with NDSU. We would have no difficulty doing the same work with NDTO if that is the wish of the legislative assembly.

Chairman Holmberg, members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, thank you for your consideration of SB 2171. I will stand for any questions.