

**North Dakota Stockmen's Association**  
**Testimony to the Senate Appropriations Committee on HB 1024**  
**March 6, 2023**

Good morning, Chairman Bekkedahl and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee. My name is Julie Ellingson and I represent the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, a 93-year-old beef cattle trade organization representing more than 3,150 North Dakota cattle-ranching families.

We support SB 1024 and, specifically, the grant for the association's Environmental Services Program. The Environmental Services Program is a statewide program launched in 2001 that helps cattle producers minimize air and water quality impacts and comply with state and federal environmental regulations. The program helps producers identify and implement cost-effective solutions that enhance the environment and their potential for profitability.

Since its debut and with support of the Department of Environmental Quality and the North Dakota Legislature, the program has been very effective. Our Environmental Services director has been invited onto nearly 720 beef cattle operations – at least one in each county – to conduct a free, confidential assessment of the animal feeding operation and to determine how it fits with state and federal regulations. From those on-site assessments, the director has also developed approximately 200 Stockmen's Stewardship Support Program and Environmental Quality Incentive Program contracts for cost-share assistance to help producers install appropriate animal waste handling systems and other best management practices and become permitted.

Even more impressive is how the program has helped reduce pollutants, such as suspended solids, nitrogen, phosphorus and fecal coli-form, from entering into waters of the state. Since 2001, it has helped permit more than 100,000 head of cattle and, more significantly, reduce nitrogen and phosphorus runoff on those operations.

The Stockmen's Association enjoys a strong working relationship with the DEQ. Because of our daily contact and close affiliation with the state's cattle producers, we are able to administer services and answer questions for folks who may not be inclined to contact a regulatory agency directly.

Cattle producers' livelihood and legacy depend on the way they care for their animals, the land they graze and the water they drink. Your support helps us enhance environmental stewardship in our state, which benefit this and future generations.

For these reasons, we ask for your favorable consideration of this program.