

Testimony of Laura Lacher
Economic Development Association of North Dakota
In Support of SB 2327
March 13, 2025

Chairman Beltz and members of the House Agriculture Committee:

My name is Laura Lacher, executive director of the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND). EDND represents economic development organizations on the front line of economic development efforts throughout North Dakota. EDND members understand that our state's long-term future depends upon expanded economic diversification and supporting innovation that will bring new wealth to the state. I am here to express support for SB 2327 relating to the Agriculture Diversification and Development Fund (ADD).

The Agriculture Diversification and Development Fund (ADD) was established through HB 1475 during the sixty-seventh Legislative Assembly to support new or expanding value-added-agriculture businesses. Since the creation of the ADD fund over 40 projects have come to fruition. These funding opportunities, including grants, interest rate buydowns and loans, are important tools for agriculture opportunities and businesses in North Dakota. With every value-added-agriculture company North Dakota supports, our state becomes more diversified and better positioned for the future.

Thank you for taking the time to allow us to share EDND's support for SB 2327. We request the committee's support in funding ADD to help grow this program for the state's future agriculture businesses.