



In Favor of SB 2019
House Appropriations – Education and Environment Division
March 21, 2025

Chairman Nathe and members of the Division:

For the record, my name is Lesley Icenogle. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the North Dakota Corn Growers Association in favor of Senate Bill 2019.

NDSU's economic contribution analysis of North Dakota's agriculture industry places ag's annual contribution to the economy at \$41.3 billion and more than 123,000 jobs. This contribution depends on a skilled workforce; however, the state's labor shortage is particularly acute in agriculture. As such, expanding and strengthening agriculture education in the K-12 school system is a policy priority for the North Dakota Corn Growers.

We rise in support of the funding for virtual reality career exploration in Section 2 of this bill. The CareerViewXR platform gives North Dakota students the opportunity to explore diverse careers in agriculture, including agronomist, farmer, veterinarian, and numerous roles at an ethanol production plant. State support for this initiative will expand access to CareerViewXR to elementary students and will demonstrate the state's commitment to the private sector.

The North Dakota Corn Growers respectfully request the Division maintain funding for virtual reality career exploration in SB 2019 and restore the \$2 million amount from the original request. Thank you for your consideration, and I will stand for any questions.