

**Testimony of Laura Lacher**  
**North Dakota Ethanol Producers Association**  
**In Support of SB 2020**  
**March 11, 2025**

Chairman Monson and members of the House Appropriations – Government Operations  
Division:

My name is Laura Lacher, executive director of the North Dakota Ethanol Producers Association (NDEPA), which represents North Dakota's six ethanol plants, industry stakeholders, and associated businesses. I am here on behalf of NDEPA to testify in support of SB 2020.

North Dakota's ethanol industry plays a vital role in economic growth, supporting jobs and expanding market opportunities for farmers. As the industry evolves, producers need access to up-to-date information on carbon management, market trends, and biofuel advancements. While these shifts create new opportunities, they also bring uncertainty. NDSU Extension is uniquely positioned to deliver the research and education farmers need to navigate these changes with confidence.

We urge the committee to support the Extension Biofuels and Carbon Management Initiative and the Biofuels and Carbon Management priority under the Agricultural Experiment Station, which will equip producers with the knowledge to adapt and thrive. Additionally, ensuring adequate operating support for NDSU Extension will maximize recent state investments in research facilities and strengthen North Dakota's agricultural sector.

This is especially important as North Dakota ethanol plants are leading the way in carbon capture and storage (CCS), with successful projects at Blue Flint in Underwood and Red Trail in Richardton. These facilities are demonstrating how ethanol production can significantly reduce its carbon footprint, positioning the industry for long-term success in low-carbon fuel markets. As policies and incentives around carbon intensity evolve, having dedicated Extension specialists

providing guidance on CCS, biofuels, and emerging technologies will be critical for producers navigating these changes.

The ethanol industry is also advancing in areas like sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and expanded biofuel applications. Funding dedicated Extension specialists will help North Dakota producers capitalize on these emerging opportunities, ensuring the state remains at the forefront of biofuel innovation.

In closing, we strongly support SB 2020 and its investment in research and education for our industry and producers. These initiatives are critical to the future success of North Dakota's agricultural and biofuels industries. We appreciate your time and urge your support for this important legislation.