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Chairman Monson and members of the House Appropriations – Government Operations Committee,

I am Brent Baldwin, a farmer from Saint Thomas, North Dakota. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am representing the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 2020.

Agriculture continues to provide big returns for our rural economies, our state, and our nation. Our production practices, which have been developed, refined, or promoted through the unbiased research of the NDSU Extension and the ND Ag Experiment Station, have ensured we offer the safest and most efficient food network in the world. However, other countries are catching up, largely due to their significant increase in public agricultural research. According to the United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, China surpassed U.S. total public expenditures on agricultural research in 2008.

NDSU Extension has a long and strong track record when it comes to providing value and returns to North Dakota Agriculture. Their presence in all 53 counties across North Dakota ensures that science-based research, information and programming is available to all agriculture producers. Any significant reduction in 2023-2025 base funding will impact Extension's mission and this statewide network.

NDSU Extension's unbiased research is extremely valuable to us producers. One example of this value is the development of various economic thresholds which are key to maintaining profitability on farm by helping in the decision making of pesticide applications. Another example is the use of NDSU Extension's research to help win a lawsuit against the EPA when a vital insecticide called chlorpyrifos was taken off the shelf for a period. Without the State's investment in agriculture, the above examples of value may not exist.

We encourage this committee to fully fund NDSU Extension and provide a DO PASS recommendation on SB 2020.

Brent Baldwin – Farmer – Saint Thomas, North Dakota
President - Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association