

Testimony for HB 1143

March 12, 2025

Dear Chair Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture and Veteran Affairs Committee,

As a local partner of the Great Plains Food Bank, I see firsthand how vital its work is to our community, Ward County, and the entire state of North Dakota. Every week, families rely on local food pantries like ours to put meals on the table, and the demand has only grown. There is only 1 food bank in the state and they can't operate efficiently without the right infrastructure. That's why I strongly support House Bill 1143, which would provide a \$10 million state investment to help build a new statewide food distribution center—a facility designed to serve North Dakotans for the next 40-50 years.

This is not just a building—it's a long-term solution to fight hunger. With more space, modern infrastructure, and increased cooler and freezer storage capacity, the new facility will allow Great Plains Food Bank to rescue and distribute more food, reach more communities like ours, and respond faster to emergencies. The best part? This investment matches private dollars already being raised, ensuring a dollar-for-dollar public-private partnership that maximizes impact without overburdening state resources.

North Dakota has the food, the generosity, and the means to ensure no one in our state goes hungry. Now, we need the infrastructure to make it happen. I humbly ask lawmakers to support HB 1143 and make this critical investment in our state's future.

Mary Carlson, Co-Chair

The Lord's Cupboard Food Pantry

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