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**Testimony of
Matt Perdue
North Dakota Farmers Union
In Support of HB 1235
Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee
March 6, 2025**

Chairman Luick and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1235. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union's (NDFU) members. NDFU supports HB 1235.

HB 1235 clarifies that cities are eligible for Agriculture Infrastructure Grant funding. To encourage value-added development in rural areas, the legislation requires that cities must have a population of 1,500 or less to be eligible.

The Agriculture Infrastructure Grant program was established during the 2023 legislative session. The fund provides grants of up to \$1.25 million to political subdivisions for road and bridge improvements necessary to accommodate value-added agriculture businesses. Agriculture Infrastructure Grants are also available to support last mile utility infrastructure necessary to support those projects.

Earlier this session, this committee gave a favorable recommendation to SB 2327, which replenishes the Agriculture Diversification and Development (ADD) fund. The Ag Infrastructure Grant program is a sub-program of the ADD fund. Continued funding for ADD will ensure the Ag Infrastructure Grant program can continue to provide an important tool for supporting development of value-added agriculture enterprises in the state.

We support the addition of cities as eligible entities for the Agriculture Infrastructure Grant. We respectfully request a "Do Pass" recommendation on HB 1235. Thank you for your consideration. I will stand for any questions.