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Chairman Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture & Veterans Affairs Committee,

I am Brent Baldwin, a farmer from Saint Thomas, North Dakota. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony. I am the President of the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association. Our members are the sugarbeet grower-owners of American Crystal Sugar Company. Each year, our members plant around 400,000 acres of sugarbeets, or about 40% of our nation's sugarbeet acres. We are submitting testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1318.

Pesticides are some of the most rigorously tested and regulated products in the United States. It is the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide ACT (FIFRA) which governs the use, sales and labeling. FIFRA requires the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to evaluate human health, ecological risks, and safety before any pesticide can be registered. As part of the evaluation, the EPA undertakes a thorough scientific review of many things, including potential carcinogenicity. The EPA cannot approve a pesticide unless it confirms it doesn't cause unreasonable adverse effects to the environment or humans.

The issue is that some states, like California, have tried to add labeling requirements that directly contradict the EPA's conclusions on the safety of specific pesticides. This has created a devastating, relentless and often meritless litigation environment which is threatening farmer access to current and future crop protection products.

This bill would ensure that any pesticide already registered with the EPA and sold under a label consistent with the EPA's own determinations, is sufficient to satisfy requirements for health and safety warnings. This bill is not a blanket immunity shield like the opposition may suggest, and this bill will still allow the state to regulate the sale and use of any pesticide within our borders.

This bill is about protecting the use of safe and reliable crop protection products for North Dakota farmers. We encourage this committee to provide a DO PASS recommendation on HB 1318.

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