

North Dakota Agricultural Association Testimony
ND Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee
March 14, 2025

Chairman Luick and members of the committee, my name is Carter Medalen, I am proud to submit testimony in support of House Bill 1318 on behalf of the North Dakota Agricultural Association (NDAA). Our organization represents agribusinesses, farm supply dealers, manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of crop production inputs and services across North Dakota. Through education, safety initiatives, and legislative advocacy, we work to strengthen the state's agricultural industry.

North Dakota's farmers and agribusinesses are already facing serious challenges. Rising input costs, uncertain commodity prices, and supply chain disruptions have made it harder than ever to plan for the future. In this environment, access to proven, effective crop protection tools is critical. Pesticides are among the most essential tools farmers use to control weeds and ensure strong yields. For example, 98% of all sugar beet acres, 92% of soybean acres, 80% of corn acres, and 58% of all wheat acres rely on the most commonly used herbicide. Losing access to these tools would not only reduce yields but also drive up costs throughout the entire agricultural supply chain.

Safety is a top priority for North Dakota's farmers and agribusinesses. Earning a pesticide applicator's license requires extensive training and certification to ensure these tools are used correctly. Pesticides undergo rigorous scientific review processes involving multiple agencies and hundreds of experts, taking more than 12 years on average from concept to field. Regulators continuously review new studies and data to ensure these products meet the highest safety standards, and when using these tools, farmers follow strict regulations and product label requirements to protect themselves, consumers, and the environment.

The impact of losing these products would extend far beyond the farm. With fewer effective weed control options, farmers would be forced to rely on more expensive and less efficient alternatives, increasing costs for agribusinesses, food processors, and livestock producers. These rising costs would inevitably be passed on to consumers, driving up grocery prices at a time when North Dakotans are still struggling with the effects of persistent inflation. Food security and affordability start in the fields. When farmers lose access to tools they have relied on for decades, the entire system becomes more fragile. Another aspect of losing herbicide options is that growers are facing more weed resistance issues each season. The best way to manage against weed resistance is to rotate herbicide modes of action. Losing viable herbicides, narrows the options that growers have for rotating those herbicide modes of actions, which will only lead to more herbicide resistance which will be a detriment to North Dakota crop production.

Without action, access to essential crop protection tools will be at risk, leaving farmers and agribusinesses in a state of uncertainty, unable to plan and invest in the future. North Dakota's agricultural community needs stability, and that's exactly what HB 1318 provides. HB 1318

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simply reasserts that the federally approved label is the law, providing the clarity and consistency needed to keep these products available to North Dakota farmers, retailers, and more. Importantly, this bill is **not** a blanket immunity shield, and individuals would still have multiple avenues if they purported to be harmed by a product.

HB 1318 ensures that farmers can continue producing the food, feed, and fuel that support our state's economy and help keep grocery prices in check. Our industry cannot afford unnecessary disruptions, and North Dakota families cannot afford higher food prices due to the loss of proven farm management tools. Supporting this bill means supporting the future of North Dakota agriculture and the communities that depend on it.

I urge you to support HB 1318 and stand with North Dakota's farmers, agribusinesses, and consumers.

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