

Testimony of Stacie Sevigny in Support of HB 1332
Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs
March 19, 2025

Dear Chairman Luick and Members of the Committee:

My name is Stacie Sevigny and I am the Executive Director of the Walsh County Job Development Authority (WCJDA) in northeast North Dakota. I am writing in support of HB 1332.

As the county's economic development organization that works with and supports businesses and communities, we see firsthand the challenges that many rural areas are facing. Agriculture is a vital piece of the community vitality puzzle in Walsh County.

The creation of value-added agricultural facilities, including processing plants, provides an incredible opportunity to diversify and protect one of our most-valued commodities.

In speaking with Walsh County potato growers about the Agristo potato processing project, there is notable excitement. This project is viewed as instrumental in providing more opportunities for growers. These opportunities will have a direct economic impact by creating needs for additional storage and infrastructure. Perhaps some of the most beneficial impacts for potato producers will be the opportunity to diversify and expand. One producer surmised it could be the largest impact potato producers experience for generations.

Value-added agricultural facilities also support our larger neighboring cities, specifically the City of Grand Forks. Strong rural communities are an important component to the entire region's economic health. The benefits of the ripple effect of a project like this could be infinite. This includes supporting new housing, increased tax revenue, and reinvestment in our communities.

Supporting House Bill 1332 is an investment in the long-term prosperity of our rural communities. These projects are essential to maintaining and growing our agricultural industry while addressing the economic challenges that have threatened the sustainability of our communities for generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Stacie Sevigny
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