

Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee

HB 1541

March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Chairperson Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Committee:

My name is Aaron Johnson, and I am the President of the North Dakota Environmental Health Association (NDEHA), as well as an onsite septic treatment system inspector for Fargo Cass Public Health. Our association advocates for the protection of the environmental health of all citizens of North Dakota through the licensure and education of local environmental health practitioners (EHP). I am providing testimony today in support of HB 1541.

In the absence of statewide oversight, local public health has been instrumental in protecting North Dakota's water resources through county ordinances going back decades. This dedicated network of educated inspectors can provide these services at minimal cost to both the state of North Dakota and property owners, and has built relationships with local installers.

The lack of a uniform state code and statewide licensure of installers has frustrated both installers and regulators. House bill 1541 (along with Senate bill 2267 after the most recent amendments) solves these issues by placing authority with the Department of Environmental Quality, and provides industry with an equal voice in establishing rules. It also keeps the relationship between DEQ and local public health intact for local inspection and permitting, which allows DEQ to establish oversight without adding significant staff and costs.

This bill protects North Dakota's health and eliminates inconsistency and confusion among septic industry professionals. I urge you to vote yes on HB 1541.

Respectfully,

Aaron Johnson

President, North Dakota Public Health Association

Registered Environmental Health Practitioner (REHS), Master's of Public Health