



Letter of Support – HB 1591

Thursday, March 13, 2025

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

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of House Bill 1591.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. Our region is proud to boast the Red River Valley Fairgrounds (RRVFG) which serves as an important community hub providing entertainment, education, and connection. This facility hosts many impactful agriculture events and programs throughout the year, such as the Big Iron Farm Show, FFA and 4-H Exhibits, and the Agriculture Education Center.

- **The Big Iron Farm Show:** In 2023, more than 60,000 attendees came from across the nation and several other countries to see demonstrations, visit 900+ exhibit booths, connect with their peers and attend training sessions.
- **FFA and 4-H Exhibits:** In 2024, the fair had over 12,100 FFA and 4-H static exhibits that were displayed for attendees to view. Additionally, in 2024 the RRVFG hosted 4-H programming for students to engage in livestock showing, a livestock quiz, and a variety of agricultural exhibits.
- **Agriculture Education Center:** Since the renovation and reopening of the AG Education Center, the RRVFG has hosted numerous fieldtrips for hundreds of area students. Providing kids and families with interactive and educational experiences to learn about our region's agriculture.

The combined events and programming at the RRVFG generate an estimated annual \$150 million in economic impact. This includes direct revenue from the fair, spending from out-of-town visitors (hotels, restaurants, retail, etc.), and regional economic activity from travel. This facility also serves as an attraction tool for the workforce. In the current labor market, quality-of-life assets and placemaking infrastructure are key to attracting and retaining workforce. The RRVFG serves as a critical community asset that energizes our community by bringing year-round placemaking opportunities – improving the quality of life of residents throughout North Dakota.

The RRVFG is an essential part of our region – generating economic activity, entertainment, and educational opportunities for our community. We recognize the impact and importance of fairgrounds across North Dakota and urge the committee to pass this bill a DO PASS to support critical infrastructure at fairs across the state.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce