



Northern
Pulse Growers
Association

Testimony of Shannon Berndt
Northern Pulse Growers Association
HB 1487
February 5, 2021

Good afternoon Chairman and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Shannon Berndt, and I am the executive director for the Northern Pulse Growers Association. The Northern Pulse Growers Association represents dry pea, lentil and chickpea growers and processors throughout North Dakota and Montana. On behalf of the pulse industry, I am here today to provide testimony in opposition to HB 1487.

The bill seeks to make changes to the beef check off that would be unnecessary. Currently all check off programs in North Dakota are voluntary, providing an option for producers to not participate by requesting a refund of the check off assessment. Some States have mandatory check off programs and provide no option for refund.

In the pulse industry the overwhelming majority of producers support funding the check off, as I am sure is the case with my fellow commodity groups. These producers understand the important role check off dollars play in funding research, education, and marketing efforts. Check off funds support important production research conducted at NDSU, UND and other facilities that directly impact all producers. Funds are also invested into domestic and international marketing programs which promote the high-quality agriculture products produced in North Dakota.

Producers that contribute their check off dollars understand that these programs contribute to the success of the industry and ultimately their farming operations. Without check off funds to provide these vital programs, it will be very difficult for North Dakota agriculture to remain competitive. For those that do not choose to make the same contributions as their fellow producers, there remains the option of refunding.

The Northern Pulse Growers Association opposes HB 1487 and hopes to ensure North Dakota continues to play a significant role in U.S. agriculture and the contributions made to markets around the world. Thank you.