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VOTING MEMBERS

Independent Beef Association
of ND
Milk Producers Association of ND
Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative
ND Ag Aviation Association
ND Agricultural Association
ND Ag Consultants
ND Agri-Women
ND Barley Council
ND Corn Growers Association
ND Corn Utilization Council
ND Crop Improvement & Seed
Association
ND Dry Bean Council
ND Elk Growers
ND Ethanol Council
ND Farm Credit Council
ND Farmers Union
ND Grain Dealers Association
ND Grain Growers Association
ND Irrigation Association
ND Lamb & Wool Producers
ND Oilseed Council
ND Pork Council
ND Soybean Growers Association
ND State Soil Conservation
Committee
ND Stockmen's Association
ND Wheat Commission
Northern Canola Growers
Association
Northern Plains Potato Growers
Northern Pulse Growers
Association
Northwest Landowners
Association
Red River Valley Sugarbeet
Growers
U.S. Durum Growers Association
Winery Association of ND

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

BNSF Railway, Inc.
Ellingson Companies
Garrison Diversion Conservancy
District
ND Association of Ag Educators
ND Association of Soil
Conservation Districts
ND Beef Commission
ND Department of Ag
ND Grazing Lands Coalition
ND Rural Water Systems
Association
ND Soybean Council
ND State Seed Commission
NDSU Agricultural Affairs

**Testimony of Darrell Oswald
Chairman
North Dakota Ag Coalition
In Opposition of HB 1487**

Chairman Johnson and members of the House Agriculture Committee, my name is Darrell Oswald, and I am here today as the chairman of the North Dakota Ag Coalition in opposition to HB 1487. The Ag Coalition has provided a unified voice for North Dakota agricultural interests for over 35 years. Today, we represent more than 40 statewide organizations and associations that represent specific commodities or have a direct interest in agriculture. Through the Ag Coalition, our members seek to enhance the climate for North Dakota's agricultural producers.

The Ag Coalition takes a position on a limited number of issues, brought to us by our members, that have significant impact on North Dakota's agriculture industry. The Coalition has numerous concerns with HB 1487, which would alter the state beef checkoff collection process and hamper producers' beef promotion, research and education program.

First, this bill is unnecessary as producers not wanting to participate in the checkoff are already eligible for a 100 percent refund. Changing the collection procedures would put more burden on the 90 percent of producers who do want to support and promote the industry. It would also make the beef checkoff collection process different from all other commodity checkoffs.

Second, collections would likely decrease due to the extra effort it would take to collect the funds. This would decrease producer-driven research, education and promotion efforts, which are fundamental for sustaining and strengthening the agricultural industry in North Dakota. Specifically, it would be detrimental to the state's ag research programs. The state checkoff programs, like the beef checkoff, work closely with the state's research institutions to provide all producers, even those refunding, cutting-edge research. Specific to

beef, this research includes data on the value of beef in a healthy diet and food safety.

Finally, the state's checkoff programs, including the beef checkoff, partner with other producer-focused organizations to host educational events, community outreach and other impactful programs. The North Dakota Beef Commission partners extensively with NDSU extension on numerous projects in the areas of beef in a healthy diet, food safety and cooking methods. One example of this is the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program, which is a valuable educational program for producers that enhances the reputation and promotion of North Dakota beef by assuring the production of a consistently wholesome and healthy product. HB 1487 puts this program and numerous others in jeopardy.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee and for your continued commitment to working together to address the needs of North Dakota agriculture. I would urge a do not pass on HB 1487.