



Senate Bill 2019

Presented by: Barry Haugen
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Before: House Appropriations – Education and Environment Division
Representative David Monson, Chairman

Date: March 5, 2021

Good morning Chairman Monson and members of the House Appropriations – Education and Environment Division. For the record, my name is Barry Haugen and I am President of the Independent Community Banks of North Dakota (ICBND). ICBND membership totals nearly 60 independent community banks throughout our state.

ICBND supports Senate Bill 2019 as it specifically relates to the appropriation of \$1,756,138 for the Adult Farm Management Program. ICBND member banks vary greatly in size - from \$30 million in total assets to over \$7 billion in total assets. While community banks across our state are variable in size, they are unanimous in their recognition that our communities and community banks rely heavily on the financial health of production agriculture. Generally, North Dakota's community banks have significant farm and ranch loan portfolios. As such, we are writing in support of the appropriation for the Adult Farm Management Program.

Financial management education for producers is critical given the challenging economic conditions that exist today. The Adult Farm Management Program provides valuable tools for producers to enhance their financial management skills and increase the likelihood of maintaining successful operations. The Adult Farm Management Program has also been a tremendous partner to ICBND and its member banks through participation in ICBND’s School of Agricultural Lending held annually. ICBND's ag lenders regularly provide anecdotal evidence that more financial management education offerings for producers are necessary particularly in the areas of investment analysis (including farm, non-farm and equipment buying decisions), risk analysis, financial structuring, marketing and production operation strategies. A void still remains and ICBND believes that the Adult Farm Management Program continues to narrow that void. The work done through this program assists our member banks’ farm and ranch customers to improve their farm productivity, protect the nation’s food supply and strengthen the local economy.

Chairman Monson and members of the House Appropriations – Education and Environment Division, we encourage your support of Senate Bill 2019 specific to the Adult Farm Management Program. Thank you for your time and consideration.