



**North Dakota Grain Growers Association
Testimony in Support of SB 2020
House Appropriations Committee
Education and Environment Division
March 9, 2021**

Chairman Monson, members of the House Appropriations Committee's Education and Environment Division, for the record my name is Ed Kessel. I am a diversified family farmer from Dickinson, North Dakota. I am also 1st Vice President of the North Dakota Grain Growers Association. I appear before you today in both capacities in support of SB 2020.

Chairman Monson, members of the Committee, I support the research and extension budget that is before you today. This budget will maintain and enhance North Dakota agriculture's research and extension efforts which in turn will enhance the North Dakota economy. Specifically, I'd like to address the importance of the agronomic work in Southwestern North Dakota. North Dakota agriculture is as diverse as its weather; the needs of the agriculture in my area differ greatly from other areas in the state. Southwestern North Dakota has an emphasis on practices such as no-till, cover crop use and pulse crop rotations. These practices require unique efforts from NDSU research and extension and emphasize the need for a research agronomist at the Dickinson Research and Extension Center. This position is a part of SBARE's priority number 2, the plant initiative for AES.

Additionally, all the research and extension efforts that are accomplished on the ground are fruitless if they cannot be analyzed and communicated to their constituency i.e. the farmers and ranchers of the state. That is why it is critical that the Committee support the "Big Data Initiative" which is SBARE's number one priority. Data gathering, analysis and dissemination is essential in the areas of genetic improvement, soil science, weather and precision agriculture especially in my area.

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As you are all very aware, the NDSU research and extension efforts are the lifeblood of North Dakota agriculture. Agriculture is the economic engine which, year in and year out, drives the North Dakota economy. Your support of SB 2020 is critical to maintaining North Dakota's agriculture's leadership both domestically and internationally. Therefore, Chairman Monson, members of the House Appropriations Committee's Education and Environment Division, I respectfully request your support of SB 2020 and would hope the Committee give the measure a Do Pass recommendation.