

Testimony Prepared for the
House Appropriations Committee
Education and Environment Division

March 9, 2021

By: Terry Traynor, NDACo Executive Director



RE: Engrossed SB2020 – Extension Service Funding

Good Afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Committee members. I am Terry Traynor, Executive Director of the North Dakota Association of Counties. I am here today to express the counties' support of Senate Bill 2020 and its funding of NDSU Extension Services.

As this committee knows, counties have been a long, and strong, supporter of NDSU Extension. When Extension faced budget cuts during the 2017-19 biennium, counties stepped up and increased their cost share, and then worked hard to revise and establish a reasonable and equitable allocation of expenses.

We appreciate that last Session you funded this allocation of costs, and that this budget will maintain the funding partnership.

Last year, counties contributed over \$6 million from dedicated property tax levies or from consolidated general fund levies to meet their cost share for NDSU Extension professional staff, support staff, and other direct expenses.

Additionally, counties – through their general funds – contributed indirectly by providing space, utilities, and other services, that our indirect cost consultant has identified as totaling over \$1.3 million – just to support Extension. I think this demonstrates the local commitment of county commissioners to this important service.

As former Morton County Commissioner, Bruce Strinden, stated: *"The many services and collaborations of Extension are critical to the future of agriculture in North Dakota."*

Clearly, we support the NDSU Extension budget in Engrossed Senate Bill 2020.