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Testimony of
Matt Perdue
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
Senate Appropriations Committee
March 31, 2021

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1431. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union's (NDFU) members. NDFU supports HB 1431 and believes bonding represents an important opportunity to support critical infrastructure investments.

NDFU appreciates the inclusion of $50 million for establishment of the Agricultural Products Development Center (APDC) in the current version of HB 1431. Public agricultural research is critical to the success of family farmers and ranchers. North Dakota State University's (NDSU) agricultural research is currently conducted in severely outdated facilities. NDSU's crop science and meats research, along with the Northern Crops Institute, should be housed in a facility that allows them to continue providing world-class research and promotion. The APDC will deliver a strong return on investment.

NDFU also strongly supports the $30 million provided for township infrastructure. Wet conditions, flooding and increased traffic have created significant stress on and, in some cases, overwhelmed rural roads and bridges. In fact, the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute estimates North Dakota's county and township roads and bridges will require investments totaling over $9.3 billion over the next 20 years.

The $10 million provided to non-oil-producing townships will help replace Operation Prairie Dog funds. The $20 million grant program will offer all townships the opportunity to access funds when necessary. The structure of this program will direct funds toward improvements that deliver the greatest long-term benefits to farmers, ranchers, rural communities and the broader state economy.

NDFU urges a "Do Pass" on HB 1431. Thank you for your consideration.