

Testimony of Neal Fisher, Administrator of the North Dakota Wheat Commission

HB 1431

March 17, 2021

Good afternoon Chair Bell and members of the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee. For the record, my name is Neal Fisher, I am the Administrator of the North Dakota Wheat Commission.

The Wheat Commission has a long-standing, leveraged, research partnership with North Dakota State University's Agricultural Experiment Station. Today the Commission stands in strong support of House Bill 1431 and the funding for the Agricultural Products Development Center (APDC), which upgrades product research and development functions currently conducted in Harris Hall, the NDSU Meats Lab, and Northern Crops Institute (NCI), all on the NDSU campus.

1—The Agricultural Product Development Center is extremely important for all of North Dakota Agriculture, and for all of North Dakota. APDC will create additional opportunity for our dedicated producers and increased revenue generation capacity for our entire economy.

2—North Dakota Agriculture is an important legacy industry and is the primary revenue generator in our state.

3—Every citizen in every county of our state benefits from increased opportunity, value, and revenue generation capacity created by greater market access, durable demand, and continued success in high value domestic and foreign markets.

4—Annual Main Street Value of ND Agriculture (Simply Price X Production) is calculated at nearly \$10 Billion (with a “B”) over the past decade. Four main pillars, Wheat, Corn, Soybeans, and Livestock now account for 80% of the total; and High Value Specialty Crops such as sugar beets, potatoes, barley, sunflower, canola, dry beans, peas, lentils, flax, and hay crops, make up the remaining 20%.

5—ND Agriculture is performing at higher levels with greater consistency and resiliency than perhaps ever before. The APDC upgrade is an opportunity to continue that upward trajectory.

6—Innovative Product Development and Product/Ingredient Promotion Efforts go “hand in hand” in today’s rapidly evolving food business; And in recognizing that fact, we have been increasingly successful at differentiating our North Dakota agricultural products as “Ingredients”, moving away from the more Generic product identities of many of our competitors.

7—North Dakota has successfully developed a well recognized and enviable reputation as a reliable, consistent supplier of high quality, high value products to our high value and quality conscious customers worldwide. That is a “Formula for Repeat Business”.

—APDC will allow us to build on this Great Platform moving forward.

Thank you for this opportunity for us to show our support and enthusiasm for the Agricultural Products Development Center (APDC) and for your past and ongoing support of North Dakota’s Number One Industry.

I will certainly try to answer any questions you may have.

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