Contact:
Matt Perdue, Lobbyist
mperdue@ndfu.org I 701.641.3303

**Testimony of
Matt Perdue
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
Senate Finance and Taxation Committee
March 17, 2021**

Chairwoman Bell 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 a major 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 North Dakota State University's (NDSU) agricultural research is currently conducted in severely outdated facilities.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 supports the funding provided for water and highway infrastructure. However, we urge the committee to add funding specifically for county and township roads and bridges. Wet conditions, flooding and increased traffic have created significant stress on and, in some cases, overwhelmed rural roads and bridges. Disruptions during the busy planting and harvest seasons have proven costly for farmers and ranchers.

According to the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota's county and township roads require $9.3 billion in investment over the next 20 years. Bonding offers an important opportunity to invest in county and township infrastructure.

Again, we appreciate the committee's consideration of bonding to meet our state's growing needs. Additional investments in rural roads are vital to the success of our state's farmers, ranchers and rural communities and merit inclusion in a final package.

Thank you for your consideration.