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**Testimony of
Matt Perdue
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
House Agriculture Committee
January 20, 2023**

Chairman Thomas and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1148. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmer Union's (NDFU) members. NDFU supports HB 1148, because it supports development of new value-added opportunities for family farmers and ranchers.

HB 1148 establishes a new Agriculture Infrastructure Fund. This fund will address external costs associated with livestock and commodity processing facilities. These facilities are often accompanied by increased truck traffic, requiring road and bridge upgrades and improvements. HB 1148 provides political subdivisions up to \$2.5 million or 80% of road improvement costs to support that development. New value-added projects often also face high costs to access natural gas, three-phase power, and water and sewer infrastructure. HB 1148 provides projects up to \$500,000 to address those "last mile" infrastructure needs.

This bill also helps promote local acceptance of livestock and agriculture processing facilities. The external costs of these projects are often a valid concern for local residents. HB 1148 helps mitigate those concerns, supporting broader efforts to build local support for new projects.

HB 1148 is modeled after South Dakota's Agribusiness Access Grant program. It is a proven model that will support continued growth in value-added agriculture in our state.

NDFU encourages a "Do Pass" recommendation on HB 1148. Thank you for your consideration. I will stand for any questions.