

Chairman Thomas and members of the House Ag Committee.

My name is Kevin Skunes and I am a corn producer from Arthur, ND.

Thank you for allowing me to testify before this committee this morning.

I speak in favor of House Bill 1153.

Having served on the North Dakota Corn Utilization Council with 3 years as Chairman, I now am a Board Member of the North Dakota Corn Growers Association. I am also a past President of the National Corn Growers Association.

I have devoted many years working for Agriculture, I have seen first hand how important it is to advocate for the corn producers and corn industry of North Dakota and the nation.

The Corn Checkoff is important to all of the producers in North Dakota.

The Corn Growers and the Corn Council have done an excellent job over the years, and I believe this bill will allow for even greater things,

The Corn Growers Association is the Policy side of our united group, working on such issues as WOTUS, Wetland issues and Wetland mitigation, helping to shape the current and prior Farm Bills as well as working on the new farm bill as a safety net for all producers, including Federal Crop Insurance, we also worked alongside NCGA to help mitigate fertilizer prices this past year!

The list is long and very important.

Having sufficient funding has been an ongoing issue. The Corn Council has done a fine job over the years, but the requests to be creative with the council contracts, and even to raise more Corporate sponsorship to pay the bills has the ND Corn Growers going in the wrong direction. I believe this bill will take pressure off of the Corn Council to make sure that the Checkoff funds are spent correctly.

Having the funds readily available to send our growers leaders here to Bismarck to meet with all of our great Representatives is a top priority as well as meetings in DC with our Federal Representatives. There are so many ways that the North Dakota Corn Growers Association can work for our corn producers! We are only limited by our own imagination if we are properly funded.

Thank you for your time.