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Chairman Thomas and members of the House Agricultural Committee,

My name is Tamra Heins, the Executive Director of the ND Pork Council. I am here on behalf of pig farmers of North Dakota, both large and small. Some of our members have 5 or 6 sows while some have 5 or 6 thousand sows.

I am here today, to ask you to support House bill 1371. North Dakota is the last frontier in pig farming. We have opportunity with our wide-open spaces that offer low population and low pig density. While diseases like PRSS and PED continue to ravage farmers in more highly populated pig areas these farmers are looking to raise high quality, healthy pigs in places like ours. We are known as a "sow state" and that is where we would see great opportunity if this bill should become law. In ND, our "sow state" is where we farrow the sows here and wean pigs and then we load those pigs on a truck and send them to mostly Southern Minnesota, Eastern South Dakota and Northwestern Iowa, closer to processing. We do this for the economic reason that is you can haul more small pigs on a semi than 280 lb finished pigs.

On any given day, it is estimated that there are a million hogs on our roads and highways in the United States. Many of these hogs are iso-weans that come from Manitoba down I-29 to the same destinations as previously mentioned to be finished and processed. I feel we could capture some of this market with ND grown pigs with changes in our law. I also know that many farmers in ND would like to diversify with pigs in their farms. Many want to capture the manure for fertilizer, which has seen even more interest with the rising cost and forecasted low availability of fertilizer.

The high cost of facilities is the biggest barrier to enter pig farming. The average cost to build a farrowing facility is between \$3000 to \$3500 per sow. Most sow farms are around 5-6000 head. A 4800 head finishing barn costs about \$1.2 million. Allowing, corporations or forming corporations is a way to bring investment capital in for farmers to build such facilities.

As we have seen, the corporate farming law does nothing to stop rich people from buying farmland. The only thing corporate farming does stop is livestock development. We have seen that work incredibly effectively for 30 years.

Unfortunately, the discussion surrounding this bill, will not focus on the advantages and disadvantages of allowing corporations to farm but will become an attack on large scale animal agriculture. The opposition will bring out every "bad apple" that has raised a pig in the last 30 years or find the disgruntled contract grower that had a bad experience and try to make it seem like that is normal. Have those things, happened. Yes. Are they the norm. Absolutely not.

The double standard in this state when it comes to livestock versus crop farming is very real, and I see it magnified, when we talk about labor force. Large crop farmers have been using H2A workers for years, and I have not every heard anyone have concerns that those employees will drain their spray tank in streams and rivers, because they are not from here and therefore don't care about our environment or our communities in which they live. But the first reaction to large scale animal agriculture, is that the workers don't care about their community or the air and water quality that they live in. I am here to tell you that simply, isn't true. In fact, my board of directors, is made up of these employees, some of them foreign workers, and they constantly give of their time and work on the council to help make our industry better.

I look forward to working with everyone that continues to want to grow livestock development in our state. And I urge you to recommend a "do pass" on House Bill 1371.

Thank you.

Tamra Heins