



**Testimony of Brenda Elmer, executive director**

**North Dakota Corn Growers Association**

**In SUPPORT of HB 1437**

**January 26, 2023**

Chairman Thomas and members of the House Agriculture Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to share our support of House Bill 1437. For the record, my name is Brenda Elmer, and I am the executive director of the North Dakota Corn Growers Association (NDCGA), which is the voice of the more than 13,000 corn growers across the state at the grass roots level for issues that impact corn producers.

Last month, Governor Burgum joined NDSU at the Capitol to unveil a first of its kind comprehensive study of the economic contribution of agriculture in the state. For the year 2020, agriculture contributed nearly \$31 billion to the economy and more than 110,000 jobs. The impact of agriculture was much more than we imagined and the state of ag in North Dakota is promising.

HB 1437 would provide the funding and guidance for townships and counties to identify suitable locations for economic development in those local areas. When local governments are short on personnel and resources, it's no surprise that such planning for economic development falls at the bottom or even off the list. It's in the best interest of the state to help identify, in advance of project site area determination, the availability of infrastructure and natural resources and all possible suitable locations for agriculture-related economic development projects and to ensure that the community is as ready as possible when the next big ag processing project is announced. To do so otherwise is hampering the state's efforts to attract viable development not only in livestock, but other rural economic development projects.

North Dakota annually produces about 400 million bushels of corn with about half dedicated to ethanol production throughout the state. Each bushel of corn processed by North Dakota ethanol plants produces about

15 pounds of livestock feed (dried distillers grains), yielding nearly 1.5 million total tons of livestock feed, including dry distillers grains, a high-protein feed sought after by livestock producers. HB 1437 would aid in the identification of potential value-added ag locations across the state and assist economic partners in connecting with the right opportunities and local governments.

When we met with the Department of Commerce late last year about this concept, it was encouraging to hear that it was consistent with its economic development objectives and potentially would provide them great value in being at the ready.

This bill would move North Dakota in a positive direction towards expanding agricultural development which in turn aids producers of corn and other commodities in building valuable markets. We urge your support of HB 1437. Thank you for your time today and I stand for any questions you may have.