

Bill 2279 Support letter

March 16, 2023

Good Morning Chairman Thomas and Members of the House Agriculture Committee

The passage of this bill is important to help bring clarity to situations such as what happened in 2017 to my parcels. In 2009 I purchased a 12 acre parcel of farm land that at the time of purchase was a township parcel, 11 years later changed to a parcel in the city limits of Crystal. It was agricultural property nonetheless, I built a potato warehouse on it in 2009 with the counties permission, and used it as any other farm storage building would be used. I harvest and store my own products in it. In 2017 our county tax department changed the classification on this 12 acre parcel to commercial without notification to me, and then proceeded to tax the improvement (warehouse) as commercial even though it was still used as part for my farming operation. Taxes on this property went from \$177 to \$31,581, yes that is correct, \$177 to \$31,581. They took this approach on other properties near Crystal as well.

The county, themselves has gone back and forth on whether it should be taxed as commercial or agricultural, all dependent on how they feel on any given day. The first couple years they claimed to be researching the issue and didn't apply the tax to the improvement, then the next year they decide to tax the improvement as commercial, after a 3 year legal battle, they exempt the property again but refused to pay back the commercial tax from the previous year. All which took place after the deadline to appeal at the State level that year. Hopefully with the passage of this bill with its proposed amendments, it will help maintain the intent of NDCC. This battle with the county government has been on going and been a costly unpleasant experience for all those involved.

I respectfully request this committee to recommend a DO-PASS

Sincerely,

Loren Estad
Crystal, ND