Dear House Agricultural Committee.

My name is Shelley Lenz, owner of State Ave Vet Clinic in Dickinson, ND and I would like to express my full support of this legislation (SB2353).

I had the joy of running a Statewide campaign for Governor in 2020. One unifying theme from my conversations across the state rural is the importance of healthy soil. People shared concerns about local food movements, food security, bee populations, carbon sequestration/climate solutions, urban gardening, improved farm/beef production, dangerous algae blooms, access to clean water, healthy foods, and green spaces; hunting, flood/drought issues and economic resilience. All these things have one thing in common--Healthy Soil.

SB2353 will enable North Dakota to take an objective look at soil health and the needs of soil health districts to better inform our investment and future direction for one of North Dakota's greatest resources—our land. This study is long overdue as it has not been looked at for over 8 years. Further, there will possibly be money in the Agriculture Resiliency Act that is going to be put in the Farm Bill. As written, up to $6 million ($1 million for planning, $5million for implementation) will be available for soil health programs for our state. Our soil districts have been working hard for generations and North Dakota is proud that we have been progressive stewards of the land. This study and possible future funding will ensure that we stay at the forefront of soil health and strengthen our programs in North Dakota with the best equipment, facilities, and staff. This is vital for now and for generations to come.

I fully support SB2353 and ask you to vote YES.

Sincerely,
Shelley J. Lenz, DVM, Ph.D.