

Good Morning, Chairman Nathe (pronounced Nay-th-ee), and members of the House Appropriations Education and Environment Subcommittee. For the record, my name is Medora Ellingson. I am the 2022-2023 Mandan FFA Chapter president and a 13-year member of the Go-Getters 4-H Club in Morton County. I appear here in support of HB 1009.

I would first like to express my gratitude for the legislature’s continued support of youth programs at the North Dakota State Fair. Young leaders like myself from around North Dakota have benefitted from their State Fair experiences, and the annual event provides the perfect opportunity to compete, develop important leadership and life skills and showcase our projects to a wide audience.

Ever since elementary school, I have participated in various aspects of the State Fair’s 4-H and FFA competitions. Within the state 4-H competitions, I have competed in the Project Expo, the communications arts contest and with my static exhibits and horses. These experiences have dramatically increased my comfort level to engage in public speaking and communicate with various audiences about my projects and the agricultural industry. The North Dakota State Fair also has provided me the opportunity to showcase my hard work that I have put in throughout the year with both my livestock and static projects. In fact, I probably wouldn’t be up here speaking to you today all if it weren’t for these opportunities introduced to me at such a young age.

The State Fair has also benefitted me as an FFA member, just as it has for chapters throughout the state. My chapter, the Mandan FFA, is an affiliated chapter and promotes the exhibition of projects at the State Fair to its members. It provides the perfect place for members to showcase their talents, perfect their skills and compete for prizes with their individual projects that range from wooden saw horses to horticulture exhibits. The prizes are incentives for participation, but the best reward of them all is the chance to learn, grow and meet others who share similar interests.

The State Fair is an important conduit of education, competition and agricultural literacy. I thank you for helping make these experiences possible for me and for the next generation of young leaders. I respectfully ask for your continued investment in this budget and HB 1009.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning. I would be happy to answer any questions anyone might have.