

Northland

POTATO GROWERS ASSOCIATION



NORTHLAND
POTATOES

January 12, 2023

RE: Support Letter for HB 1020

Chairman Monson and Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

The Northland Potato Growers Association (NPGA), representing North Dakota potato growers, supports HB 1020, and specifically, the following SBARE priorities:

1. Agricultural Experiment Station Initiative-Plant Protection and Production. Scientists to conduct crop disease research and DREC agronomist.
 - a. Plant diseases are a constant concern for producers. Several of these are caused by bacterial plant pathogens including Goss' wilt of corn and Dickeya soft rot of potatoes, both which can cause tens of millions in damage. Other, longer-established bacterial diseases in the state, such as common blight of dry bean and ring rot of potato, reduce producer profitability and can limit seed production in the state. New virus diseases such as potato virus Y, have emerged and hamper efforts to breed new crop varieties and reduce producer profitability.
2. Extension Program Initiative-Cropping System. Extension specialists to work on western crop production, weed management, on farm research.
 - a. Additional expertise and educational programs are needed in response to new and emerging plant diseases and fungicide-resistant pathogens that limit crop yields, controlling the spread of noxious and invasive weeds, and advancing cropping systems that sequester soil carbon, increase plant growth, retain water and build soil health.
3. Capital Improvement-Ag Field Lab-a cornerstone of facilities needed for agronomic research. House work for breeding, plant pathology, soil science, and high value crops. Replace aging facilities, modernize research capability, recruit the best and the brightest researchers.
 - a. Waldron Hall, Widakas Laboratory, the Potato Research Laboratory, and the Horticulture laboratory were all built between the 1940s and 1960s prior to modern equipment commonly used in field research, and at a time when field crop production yields in North Dakota were much lower. This facility must support research in tuber and root crops, such as potatoes.

We would strongly encourage this committee to approve funding for the above priorities to keep ND as an agriculture economic leader.

Thank you,
DocuSigned by:

Donavan K. Johnson

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President

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