

In Support Of
House Bill 1020
Hearing Brynhild Haugland
Monte Peterson
North Dakota Soybean Growers Association

Chairman Monson and members of the committee Good Morning,

My name is Monte Peterson and I come before you to express my support for H.B. 1020. My wife and I have a farm south of Valley City in Barnes County where we grow Soybean, Corn and Wheat.

For committee members, whom are not as familiar with me, along with farming the last 42 years, I have volunteered time back to my fellow soybean growers during the last 15 plus years to promote the states soybean industry. First serving as a director and Chairman of the North Dakota Soybean Council for seven years and as it's Research Chair for a couple of years within that time.

I am currently serving as a director for the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association and the American Soybean Association, both advocacy organizations. I am also the immediate Past Chair of the U.S. Soybean Export Council which is tasked with building a preference for U.S. soy world wide.

I wanted to preface my remarks with that so that you may better understand my perspective about Agricultural Research.

Going back 35 years ago when I planted my first soybean field, it was nothing more than an experiment. Today 50 % of the cropland acres on our farm are planted to soybean. As I became more familiar with the state's soybean industry some 15 years ago, you could say it was still just beginning to blossom. Today we know, the states soy industry has changed dramatically.

Without the research that we have invested in, we would never be where we are today. The need for that continued research is stronger today than it was in the beginning, because without the continued unbiased, science-based information we receive through extension, we could not continue to make the strides that we have. Sure, private industry can and will offer choices, but it is land grant driven research that ground truths those options.

Whenever a crop is introduced into a new area, it needs the help of a plant breeding program that can identify a best cultivar and varietal potential for the area in which it is grown. Whenever a new crop becomes established in a new area, it needs the help from an initiative that will specialize in finding answers to the ever-evolving pathogens, diseases and pests that can affect our crops.

Just over my time with the industry, we have witnessed an increase of soybean planted acres from roughly 2 million acres to as high as 7 million acres. What started out as a crop that was planted in just a couple of counties in the southeast part of the state has grown statewide. I believe every county in the state has reported planted acres of soybean. That would not have happened without the investment in research that has been made.

I like to remember how commodity groups also leverage their dollars with these public funds to create an even bigger bang for the buck and remember how extended industry has now committed to building processing here in North Dakota. This investment pays dividends.

Production agriculture across the U.S. and here in North Dakota is changing rapidly and how quickly we build on using precision agriculture and big data and utilizing the climate smart resources we have available to us to become more sustainable is imperative. Our customers are depending on us to become more ecologically sustainable. We need research to help us with this equation.

To do all this we need qualified people and to entice those people to work here they will need competitive but fair and equitable compensation. Those on board now and those that are additionally needed must have the necessary laboratory and facilities to get the job done. I encourage the continued investment into North Dakota Agriculture and it's communities and your support for this bill.

Thank you for allowing me to provide comment today.