

**Testimony for the NDSU Williston Research Extension Center, Christopher Schauer, Acting Director
Senate Appropriations Hearing – HB1020
March 9, 2023**

Thank you Chairman and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee. For the Record, my name is Christopher Schauer and I am the Acting Director of the Williston Research Extension Center. The previous Director, Jerry Bergman, retired on November 1 and I took on Acting Director responsibilities at that time until a new Director is hired.

Thank you to the previous Legislative Assemblies for funds for the construction of our seed plant for the Foundation Seedstocks program. We have completed the building of the new seed plant and are moving forward knowing we have the right equipment in place to continue to serve the western seed industry.

The research and extension at the Williston REC continues to focus on Dryland and Irrigated Agronomy, Plant Pathology, and Weed Science. Staffing continues to be an area of emphasis in order to conduct field based research. We continue to look to new avenues to recruit staffing to the Williston area. We have continued to invest in temporary housing to address some of the staffing needs, but continued support through deferred maintenance, operating funds, and salary support is always appreciated.

The Cropping Systems Initiative in the SBARE Extension priority list, and the Plant Production and Protection Initiative in the Ag Experiment Station priority list, are both initiatives that would support the Williston REC and the regional agronomic producers. Both initiatives are ranked as a high priority by SBARE. In the Capital Improvement priority list, the Williston REC is requesting a facility for the Nesson Valley Irrigation site. An office, lab space, heated shop, and a small conference room are needed as the site is located 27 miles from Williston. The irrigation research staff currently do not have any heated facilities other than the chemical storage room. This facility would support ongoing efforts for growers related to irrigation and high value crops as well as support expansion of irrigation, food processing and livestock industries in western North Dakota. This item was currently included on the House bill for funding at \$1.2 million.

The last item from both the past and the future is our continued effort to fund and build a Greenhouse to support all of our programs, especially our Plant Pathology program. Currently we have been authorized to fundraise up to \$500,000 for the construction of a modest facility similar to the one at the Carrington REC. Unfortunately, with the current construction market, \$500,000 is not adequate for this project. We are requesting an additional \$750,000 in authorization to continue fundraising efforts. Recent estimates indicate \$1.25 million is needed to construct the facility that was originally envisioned. We have looked at similar facilities both in MT and ND, and feel the project we had envisioned is still the correct size and scope, it has just become more expensive in the past 4 years than originally planned. The House currently has included this additional authorization.

In closing, I thank you for your past support and am looking forward to another productive biennium. I will entertain any questions.