

In Support Of

House Bill 1020

Senate Appropriations – Government Operations Division

Monte Peterson, North Dakota Soybean Growers Association

Chairman Wanzek and members of the committee, my name is Monte Peterson and I wish 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 Soybeans, Corn and Wheat.

For committee members who may not be 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 state's soybean industry. First, I served as a director and Chairman of the North Dakota Soybean Council for seven years and as its 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 a past chair of the U.S. Soybean Export Council which is tasked with building a preference for U.S. soy worldwide.

I wanted to preface my testimony with that background so that you may better understand my perspective about the importance of the NCI and the proposed feed mill upgrades.

When I planted my first soybean field 35 years ago, it was nothing more than an experiment. 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. Now, North Dakota is a leading exporter of whole soybeans to markets like China.

However, the paradigm of soybean marketing in North Dakota is changing again. With the high-quality soybean meal which will soon be available to market, we need additional research and background about using North Dakota meal in feed rations. Hence the need to update the NCI feed mill to world class standards. We need to bring in the technology that our international customers are expecting to use.

NCI is renowned around the world as a credible source of information. During my international travels supporting the soybean industry, the NCI is widely recognized as an authority. This feed mill update will reinforce that leadership status.

As we move from exporting almost all of our soybeans whole, to crushing a quarter of the crop in the coming year, trade teams continue to visit North Dakota, the NCI and to attend courses at the feed mill. Several soybean-focused projects are planned for this year at the feed mill, and I just returned from a planning meeting for the next several years where there was a focus on marketing soybean meal. This increase in meal availability provides an opportunity for the soybean industry to diversify and target markets which don't have a developed crush industry.

We are realizing the dream of adding value to the North Dakota soybean crop. We ask for your support of the NCI Feed Mill upgrade project to help add more value. I encourage the continued investment into North Dakota research and extension and your support for this bill.