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March 2, 2023

Dear Senators of the Appropriations Committee,

RE: HB 1020 NDSU Ag Field Lab

On behalf of the over 200 members of the North Dakota Nursery, Greenhouse & Landscape Association, I urge you to support HB1020 to support NDSU Field Lab, which will replace the greenhouses that will be demolished in the next 4 years.

NDSU's Horticulture Program needs the new Field Lab to support the woody plant improvement research. Horticulture students also need real-life experiences growing plants. Our members utilize NDSU Horticulture students as interns and employees. The more field lab experience students have, the better employees they are.

Just this morning I received a request regarding near-retiring greenhouse owner from western ND seeking horticulture students who may wish to take over the business in a small town. A new Ag Field Lab is critical to providing that crucial training needed for NDSU students.

Over the years, there have been NDSU tomato and vegetable varieties released that are great for our state – Cannonball, Lark, and Sheyenne tomatoes, Gold Nugget Squash, and Mantador Broccoli come to mind. Thus far, NDSU has released 60 tree and shrub varieties that are all hardy and adapted for our state. This is so important because other companies and universities do research but often their releases are not tough enough to handle our cold, pH, and wind. Their plants are geared toward larger population areas to increase their sale

As you know, the ND State Board of Agricultural Research and Education (SBARE) ranked SDSU Field Lab as their #1 priority, with many of our members testified or submitted supportive comments. Please support HB1020 for NDSU Field Lab.

Gloria Vande Brake

Executive Director