

HB 1153 in SUPPORT

March 24 2023
Anthony Mock, Kintyre, ND

Good morning Chair Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee. My name is Anthony Mock. I am a corn grower from Kintyre, ND where I farm with my family. I'm a current at-large member of the North Dakota Corn Growers Association board. I'm here in support of house bill 1153.

I have been very involved in the ethanol market development in the state, and have also served on one of the three national organizations in the country. Ethanol has been a game changer for the corn grower in the last 20 years, developing value added agriculture and better demand and prices for corn.

With the electric vehicle market emerging, ethanol as a sustainable fuel available widely and right now, being at the table is critical. The North Dakota Corn Utilization Council is no longer involved in any of the three ethanol organizations and has chosen not to serve on any of the National Corn Grower Association Action teams for the last couple of years including the one on Ethanol. The Growers Association needs the resources necessary to fill this gap, to provide an important service for our state's corn growers. Otherwise we are missing the opportunity to develop new markets on the rise, like sustainable aviation fuel.

There are dozens of other examples of significant gaps in priorities of the state's corn producers not being addressed by this public agency and they have been increasingly been operating in a vacuum, not communicating with the corn growers, removing us from their meeting agendas, refusing to come to joint advisory committees long established. The Corn Council executive director even told our former president when he was president that "you growers are nothing but a burden to us." She told the Growers executive director that the Growers Association is "no different than other vendors we have."

They talk about being elected by their peers, but it is often nothing more than their outgoing board member hand picking their replacement to show up at a county extension meeting that is sparsely attended, sometimes having no one show up at all. Last year when the Growers staff simply contacted one county to find out when that meeting would be held, the Council executive director fired off a terse email telling her to stay in her own lane, and "don't interfere with the elections are per state law."

This is a classic example of a state agency, run by a state employee who controls the finances by fear and intimidation to maintain her control over this pot of money and we have been trying for six to seven years to resolve this but cannot get through to their board that simply doesn't know what is going on other than what their staff tells them at their meetings three or four times a year.

I ask for your DO PASS on House Bill 1153. Thank you for your time. I stand available for any questions you may have.