

Opposition to HB 1371

Chairman Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

As a resident, I value how historic protections have allowed small and mid-size producers to continue as a pillar of North Dakota's heritage. As a consumer, I seek regional diversified food and other agriculture-based products that don't threaten rural livelihood. Please oppose HB 1371. HB 1371 presents an unnecessary risk to small and mid-size producers and threatens the economic livelihood and public health of rural communities at large.

Rather than ushering in the next generation of agriculture, the exemptions in HB 1371 set us up to repeat recent history and ignore lessons from other midwest states, where large-scale hog and dairy operations have pushed out smaller farms and have out-paced any safeguards for public health and water quality.

I am not a farmer, I come from a family of teachers and accountants. I understand the need for capital investment and innovative solutions to support farm business and economic livelihood. But the potential benefit of investment via the exemptions codified in HB 1371 do not outweigh the risks to rural communities.

Diversified and value-added agriculture should be a part of a prosperous North Dakota, but paving the path forward should be a thoughtful process, rather than a hasty exemption poised to allow corporate takeover of land and communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Olivia Johnson
Jamestown, ND
Resident and Dakota Resource Council Member