



**Testimony of Dr. Andrea Grondahl
Livestock Industries Director
North Dakota Department of Agriculture
Senate Bill 2100
Senate Agriculture Committee
Fort Union Room
January 6, 2023**

Chairman Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee, I am Dr Andrea Grondahl, Director of the Livestock Industries Division of the Department of Agriculture. I am here today on behalf of the North Dakota Department of Agriculture in support of Senate Bill 2100, which would require licensure of meat processing businesses.

The Department currently only has the authority to register meat processing businesses. There is no licensing requirement. Events in the past two years demonstrated that a registration requirement alone does not adequately protect the public. A registration requirement alone does not provide adequate statutory authority to suspend a meat processing plant from operating if they fail to meet facility safety or sanitation requirements.

It is critical that meat during processing is handled correctly in a sanitary environment and in a manner to preserve its wholesomeness. If it is not, there is a substantial risk of food borne illness. The vast majority of meat processors fully understand this and consequently meticulously abide by regulatory requirements in place to keep their meat products safe. This bill is needed for the ones that are not doing so and, as a result, are increasing the risk of making someone sick.

Most states that operate a state meat inspection program require annual licensing. This bill will only require meat processing businesses to obtain a one-time license for a nominal fee.

The sole purpose of meat facility licensure is to protect the public's health and safety by uniformly holding meat processing facilities in the State reasonably accountable for their activities and behavior. This reasonable licensing requirement will better enable the Agriculture Department to perform the job it has been tasked to do.

Chairman Luick and committee members, thank you for your consideration of SB 2100. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.