NORTH DAKOTA Farmers Union

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Testimony of
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Before the
Senate Finance and Taxation Committee
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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2178. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union's members.

During NDFU's most recent annual convention, our members adopted a special order of business outlining our priorities for this legislative session. Included in that list of priorities is funding for rural roads and bridges. Having a strong network of township and county roads is critical to farmers' and ranchers' ability to access the market.

The rural landscape has evolved significantly since many of our township roads and bridges were first built. Gone are the days of single axle trucks and two-wheel drive tractors. Our rural roads are also experiencing increased use from the state's energy industry and added stress from flooding. While maintaining our roads is important, so too are special projects to widen, improve or replace sections of township roads and bridges. Those projects are often costly.

SB 2178 provides townships with the flexibility they need to reserve funds for special projects. One hundred thousand dollars often falls far short of the cost of an improvement project. Increasing the special road fund cap to $500,000 will allow townships to address those needs. The bill also will improve townships' access to state and federal matching funds. Ultimately, the bill will improve the transportation system for all rural road users.

We urge a "Do Pass" recommendation on SB 2178. Thank you for hearing my testimony. I look forward to answering any questions.