

Good Morning Chairman Patten and members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I am Paul Brown, a third generation farmer/rancher and landowner just east of Bismarck where I have lived and worked all 35 years of my life.

On our farm, we practice regenerative agriculture and utilize the principles of nature to grow our topsoil and produce nutrient-dense food. We have been nationally recognized as one of the leaders in regenerative ag. and have hosted thousands of people here over the past 15 years. These people come from all over the world to see our practices and how we have grown our topsoil.

Regenerating the soil is of utmost importance to us as it had been depleted over the past 100 years on our farm. Organic matter levels that were diminished to 0.5% are now well over 7% and continue to rise. Our soils are alive and healthy and are able to infiltrate more water and store more carbon. In fact, each percent increase in organic matter can hold an additional 27,000 gallons of water per acre and many metric tons of carbon.

Sequestering carbon through a plant is the most efficient and cost-effective way there is to store carbon in the soil. However, over the past year and a half I have spent a lot of time attending meetings, visiting with neighbors, and kindly asking trespassing surveyors to get off of land they had no permission to be on because our ranch lies in the path of a proposed CO2 pipeline. I am writing to you today in strong support of SB 2209.

Myself, as well as an overwhelming majority of my neighbors are in opposition of the pipeline and especially the threat of eminent domain being used on our properties for such a project. Eminent domain is not to be taken lightly and I was honestly appalled to find out that a private company could qualify as a common carrier. I question how CO2 from ethanol plants being sequestered 5,000+ feet below ground is for the greater good? Personally, if eminent domain is to be used, then the soil that we have worked so hard to grow would be destroyed in the path of the pipeline and it is highly unlikely that just compensation would occur. How do you put a value on many years of growing healthy soil?

The safety of a high-pressure CO2 line that is 2' in diameter, pressurized at 2300 psi and only buried 4 feet below ground is also very concerning. As you know, most existing water, gas and electrical lines are at least 6' below ground due to many factors. If a failure was to occur, the damage would be catastrophic to all life in the surrounding area. As Bismarck sees continued growth north and east, this proposed line would be set right in the path of land that will likely be developed in the future.

I would appreciate your support of increasing the threshold to 85% landowner participation in a project such as this before eminent domain can be used. In this case, I would guarantee that there is less than 20% of the population in favor of this pipeline based on the conversations I have had about this proposed project. In supporting this bill, you are backing the voices of many landowners and their property rights. Thank you for your consideration.

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