

**SB 2049**  
**Senate State and Local Government Committee**  
**Jan. 5, 2023**

Good morning, Chairwoman Roers and members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee. For the record, my name is Julie Ellingson and I represent the North Dakota Stockmen's Association. For those of you who are not familiar with the Stockmen's Association, it is a 93-year-old trade organization representing the state's beef cattle producers. Many of those producers also are state school land lessees and utilize those lands to sustain their beef herds – hence the reason our organization has an interest in SB 2049.

I am grateful to Mr. Stegmiller of the North Dakota Department of Trust Lands for flagging this bill for us even before the session began to give us a chance to provide the Department with our feedback and suggestions for improvement.

For the most part, the changes presented here seem reasonable and we can appreciate what the Department is asking for you to consider. The only reservation we have, as Mr. Stegmiller noted, is in 1e of Section 15-08-19.1 regarding organized events. While we can understand the Department's interest in being the permission grant for such events, we believe it is essential that those decisions are made in concert with the lessee. It would not be appropriate for the lessee to be left in the dark about such an event on his or her leased pasture and not have the chance to weigh in on it. Depending on the nature of the event, it could very well disrupt the lessee's operations and cause him or her – or the animals grazing there – a hardship. Including the lessee on the decision of whether an organized event can take place there will help maintain an effective communication channel and relationship between the Department and the lessee. The Department has indicated that that sort of lessee consultation is part of its regular practice, and we are so glad to hear that. Still, we think it will go a long way to codify this practice so the expectations are crystal clear.

We worked with the Department in crafting the language we believe captures the shared sentiment and would urge you to adopt the proposed amendment when you advance the bill. *(The suggested language for 1e is: "Has been approved in writing by the commissioner after consultation with the lessee if the lands are leased.")*

Thank you for your consideration and for allowing me to present this morning. I will stand for any questions you have.