

## **Testimony for HB 1143**

**Date Hearing: January 16, 2024**

Chairman Beltz and House Agriculture Committee Members,

My name is Cody Sand. My wife, Deanna, and I own and operate Sand Ranch, a 3000-acre cattle ranch in South Central North Dakota. Our ranch is all grass located in the Coteau Hills that focuses on environmentally friendly grazing practices.

A few years ago, seeing a need for more locally sourced foods, we decided to get out of the conventional cattle market and directly sell our own home raised beef. Our mission was to provide locally raised, healthy beef to customers in North Dakota. We decided to focus on person-to-person deliveries and selling via farmers markets. We chose not to ship beef all over the United States, but to keep a more local, let our customers know us producer, and share access to high quality protein right here in our state.

Prairie Soul Meats was opened in 2018. People can come to our ranch to pick up orders. We also hand deliver orders to mostly the Fargo and Bismarck areas and directly sell beef cuts at farmers markets.

Previously I served on my church council, we administered a local food pantry through our church. Ordering things from a mysterious (to me) food bank in Fargo. I didn't know anything about this food bank until partnering with them about 2 ½ years ago via a USDA grant that helped provide local foods through the Great Plains Food Bank feeding network. After working with them for the last couple of years and learning what they do, I am amazed on the impact they have on the lives of people throughout our state. I can only say they are incredible. Their distribution service is top notch and something that not only our state needs, but also local producers, like myself, are blessed to have access to. It would be impossible for us as small business owners and ranchers to impact so many people throughout our state alone.

Communication with Great Plains Food Bank employees and drop off of our beef products has been a pleasant experience. It is truly an amazing place.

I write all of this to urge your support of House Bill 1143. The passage of this bill will help enhance Great Plains Food Bank in their ability to help provide food to people all over North Dakota. Great

Plains Food Bank is crucial for continuing the fight against hunger and providing local producers with a way to provide food to so many families and communities throughout the state.

Thank you for your time,

Cody Sand

Ashley, ND