

Thank you, Chairman Beltz, Vice-Chair Hauck, and Committee members, for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

My name is Suzannah Gerber, Executive Director of the Association for Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Innovation (AMPS Innovation). We represent the unified voice of the American cell-cultivated and cell-cultured industry, advancing innovative, high-quality, safe meat, poultry, and seafood produced directly from animal cells. This technology complements the agricultural community by helping to meet global food demands while maintaining the United States' leadership in biotechnology.

Two American companies have already received federal approval to produce and sell cultivated meat following extensive safety reviews by the FDA and USDA—exceeding standards applied to traditional meat. These products are currently available on a limited scale, where they are clearly labeled as cell-cultivated or cell-cultured meat.

HB 1151 addresses a non-existent issue for North Dakota, as cultivated meat is not yet widely available for purchase. However, passing this bill would forgo future economic opportunities, including job creation, sales tax revenue, and the sale of foods grown and products made in North Dakota to this innovative sector. It would also create barriers to interstate commerce and conflict with American values such as free-market competition, consumer choice, limited government, and food security. Even organizations like the Meat Institute, the Institute for Justice, and the CATO Institute have opposed similar legislative measures, emphasizing the importance of fair access for cultivated meat in the American market.

For instance, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association has stated, "We do not support the route of banning these outright," and affirmed their willingness to compete in the marketplace. Consumers and local retailers -not legislation- should drive market decisions. A patchwork of state-by-state restrictions would erode the foundational principles of our free-market system. Passing HB 1151 could set a risky precedent, what would stop one state from restricting the sale of agricultural products from another state? Moving away from free enterprise and limited government could lead to significant, unintended consequences.

Such policies hinder economic growth, discourage investment, and threaten America's ability to remain competitive in global agricultural innovation. As former USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue warned, failing to support these advancements allows countries like China to outpace the U.S., leaving us at a strategic disadvantage. That time is now— China and other governments are invested in this technology, prioritizing not only R&D but also market approvals, and the U.S. is indeed falling behind.

Moreover, cultivated meat uses fewer natural resources, potentially freeing these for traditional farmers while creating jobs and spurring economic growth. This is why companies like ADM and Cargill, agencies such as NASA and USDA, and universities across the country are investing in this technology. By banning this innovation, North Dakota is preventing skilled workers and biotechnology from economic development in the state.

Throughout history, the U.S. has embraced agricultural innovation, and doing so again will ensure we meet global food demands safely and sustainably. Supporting innovation now positions states like North Dakota to reap economic and societal benefits in the future.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote "NO" on HB 1151. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,
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