Testimony HB1207
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Mr Chairman and member of the Committee.

I am Zachary Cassidy of the Dakota Resource Council, expressing our support of of HB1207 for the following reasons:

1. **This bill gives more people a fair chance to participate in the North Dakota Beef Commission.** HB1207 will end a system where independent cattle producers have to join memberships of an organization to be considered for the beef board. As it stands now the people that may be needed to advocate change in the cattle and beef industry are the ones who will be looked over in favor of those that support the status quo. If HB1207 were to be passed it would be the producers who could, with their votes, determine if they are satisfied with the status quo or opt for a change in leadership.
2. **This bill clearly defines an eligible voter.** Previous criticisms of the bill have often stated that there is no way to define a voter. Now it sets that limit at an 18 year old beef producer actively engaged means that the individual has an ownership interest in a cattle operation, is engaged in an activity of sufficient scope and significance as to constitute a distinct activity; and has direct control of the cattle operation for the preceding year.
3. **This bill does not immediately kick off existing members.** This bill will let people serving currently finish their terms until their time served has ended.
4. **This is how all the other commodity checkoff programs conduct business.** Corn, Soybean, Wheat, and Barley board positions are elected, it is only reasonable and fair that our beef farmers enjoy the same level of democratic governance as their counterparts in other farming industries.
5. **The Extension Office will conduct the vote.** This also spells out how the election will take place and still allow the governor and other government officials to have flexibility to nominate officials if needed.

This is common sense legislation. We recommend a DO PASS.