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HB1207

Thank you, Chairman Beltz. Chairman Beltz and Agriculture Committee: Dori Hauck, District 36 consisting of portions of Stark County, Morton County and Dunn County in western North Dakota.

Today I bring to you HB1207 regarding the North Dakota Beef Commission board of directors selection process.

One minute regarding my background in the livestock industry: My maternal grandparents raised dairy cattle among many other agriculture products and my mom was one of the milk girls. She is 1 of 14 siblings and each had their role on the farm. My paternal grandparents were farmers and ranchers. They and their 2 sons raised Hereford cattle and my uncle and dad received many awards for their show heifers and steer calves. My grandparents and parents transitioned from Hereford to Charolais and were very active in livestock associations the entire time they were producers. My husband and his father are currently members of the American Highland Association. My husband, Doug, and I have a commercial cow calf operation and 16 purebred Scottish Highlands.

North Dakota Beef Commission is one of the 44 Qualified State Beef Councils across the United States. Yesterday we had a wonderful presentation by the Beef Commission board president and he definitely made us all dream of steaks and burgers for lunch! As presented, the Beef Commission is charged with investing the checkoff dollars coming in from ND livestock producers.

While each beef council has a common thread of promoting United States beef production and consumption, each state decides how their beef council is comprised and selected.

This process varies from elected to appointed to a combination of elected and appointed. The beef councils vary in size from a handful of representatives to over 20. For those boards that are appointed, interested parties also vary from very specific - for example Dairy Council and Registered Angus Association - to more open ended such as cow/calf producer, feeder, and range cattle producer.

Discussions and interim studies have been facilitated over the course of several years regarding the makeup and selection of the ND Beef Commission board of directors. The

2021 interim study notes in 1973, HB1327 established the Beef Commission with nine members appointed by the Governor.

The Beef Commission board is one of the over 150 boards and commissions which requires the Governor to appoint. These boards and commissions represent industries that keep our state strong and successful. To be considered on one of these Governor appointed boards, you must apply through the State's dashboard for Boards and Commissions. The staff within this agency are assigned dozens of boards and commissions to comprise his or her portfolio. It is the responsibility of a staff member to review and screen each application. Those applicants that meet qualifications of any given board or commission are then forwarded on to the next stage of the process.

By statute 4.1-03-02, the nine person ND Beef Commission is comprised of three beef producers, one cattle feeder, one dairy producer, one representative from the public livestock market, and an additional three at-large representatives.

Per statute, the Governor appoints all of these members through the following process: three beef producers from a list of at least 2 names submitted by the ND Stockmen's Association; one cattle feeder from a list of at least 2 names by the ND Stockmen's Association Feeder Council; one dairy producer from a list of at least 2 names from the ND milk producers association; one public livestock market representative from a list of at least two names from the ND Livestock Marketing Association; and the three at large representatives. The potential members are vetted by the Governor's Boards and Commissions staff member who is assigned the Beef Commission.

HB1207 removes the appointment process and replaces it with an election process. The election requires that ND livestock producers within delineated districts nominate and vote for a cattle producer to represent their district.

Looking at the proposed legislation, page 3 indicates that members must be actively engaged in livestock production or has been in the last year.

Section 3 discusses the terms of office. In an effort to efficiently stagger terms, you will notice lots of dates, districts and varied one year to three year terms. Over the course of the next three years, the terms will be uneven until 2028 when all elected members will begin serving three year terms.

Section 4 allows the Beef Commission board to appoint a member in the event of a vacancy.

Section 6 lays out the nine proposed districts requiring the Beef Commission to review the districts once every seven years for potential redistricting. USDA National Agricultural Statistics Services May 8, 2023, shows the following Cattle and Calf Inventory:

District 1: 202,500	District 6: 213,200
District 2: 223,000	District 7: 190,700
District 3: 206,000	District 8: 145,500
District 4: 201,000	District 9: 202,000
District 5: 166,100	

Section 7 places the election process under the expertise of the county extension office. This is the same or very similar process as many of the ND commodity councils. The extension office is able to identify those producers who are taking advantage of a federal grazing or livestock program through the farm service agency. For those producers who do not utilize a farm service agency program and would like to cast a vote, they can self-certify.

Section 8 dictates elections costs are the responsibility of the commission. There is no fiscal note associated with this bill.

Section 9 allows, with parameters, the producers to request a change in the state's portion of the checkoff. The producers pay \$1.00 federal mandate and \$1.00 state mandate on every animal sold. If the producers would like to make an increase to the checkoff, they could vote on such a change and then bring that information to the legislature.

The election process is not a new process for us as citizens nor for a beef council. Minnesota and Nebraska both use an election process for their beef council board of directors. This democratic process is used to elect individuals like the Governor, city mayor, county commissioners and many more. Each person gets one vote. HB1207 is making a significant change, I recognize this. Yet, this bill is not requesting anything that isn't being done by the majority of our ND agriculture commodity groups and several other beef commissions.

Thank you Chairman Beltz and Committee Members for your consideration of HB1207.



