Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 1207

Good Morning Chairman Beltz and members of the House Ag Committee,

For the record, my name is Denise Rohweder and I am a dairy producer from Wishek. I am here representing the Milk Producers Association of North Dakota. In full transparency I also serve on the ND Beef Commission but am not representing them today. I appreciate the opportunity to address you today regarding House Bill 1207. The Milk Producers Association of North Dakota stands in strong opposition to this bill, which, if passed, removes dairy representation from the North Dakota Beef Commission board. Our organization believes it is crucial to recognize the vital role that dairy producers play in the success and sustainability of the beef industry, both in North Dakota and across the nation.

Dairy cattle are a fundamental component of the U.S. beef supply. In fact, 26% of the beef produced in the United States comes from dairy cattle or cattle with dairy genetics. Without the contributions of dairy cattle, the beef industry would be unable to meet the growing consumer demand for beef. From finished dairy steers to cull cows, every part of the dairy industry adds significant value to the beef market. Finished dairy steers alone contribute approximately 12.6% of the U.S. beef supply, while cull dairy cows provide an additional 7%. Collectively, these contributions make up a substantial portion of the beef products found in stores and served on restaurant menus across the United States and globally.

Additionally, the dairy industry supports the Beef Checkoff program. Dairy producers are proud contributors to this critical initiative, with each dairy animal sold in or from North Dakota contributing $2 per head to the program. Collectively, dairy producers contribute approximately 20% of the national Beef Checkoff assessments—an investment that helps promote and sustain the beef market both domestically and internationally. This funding is essential in supporting the growth and success of the beef industry, and it is a testament to the collaborative efforts of both the beef and dairy sectors.

The industry seat on the Beef Commission board ensures there is someone advocating for dairy's role in the beef industry. It ensures collaboration between both segments of the cattle industry, and it allows dairy producers the representation of their checkoff dollars. This partnership demonstrates the power of collaboration between the two industries in meeting consumer preferences and advancing the sustainability of our food production systems.

I urge you to vote no on House Bill 1207. The removal of dairy representation from the North Dakota Beef Commission board would be a disservice to both the dairy and beef industries, as it would diminish the vital partnership that has been built over many years. Dairy plays an indispensable role in the continued success and growth of the beef industry, and their contributions to the Beef Checkoff and overall beef production must be recognized and valued.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.