Testimony of
Matt Perdue
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
House Agriculture Committee
January 17, 2025

Chairman Beltz and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1207. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union's members. NDFU supports HB 1207.

HB 1207 establishes an election process for the North Dakota Beef Commission. Under current law, the governor appoints every member of the Beef Commission. Six of those nine appointments are made from nominations by specific groups. This process is unique among checkoffs in North Dakota. Of the 10 commodity councils in North Dakota, eight have elected boards.

Our member-driven Policy & Action recognizes that research and promotion are important to the success of family farmers and ranchers. We support elections for checkoff boards, which give all participating producers equal opportunity to serve. The election process also gives all producers the opportunity to vote for their representatives on the commission.

HB 1207 also establishes a referendum process for adjusting the state beef checkoff. Currently, North Dakota cattle producers pay two dollars per head into the beef checkoff. The first dollar goes to the Cattlemen's Beef Board, the national checkoff group. The second dollar goes to the North Dakota Beef Commission. The referendum process included in this bill requires a more stringent process than the national process, requiring at least 15 producers to sign a petition to initiate a referendum. The bill also requires geographic diversity in who signs the petition.

This issue has been heavily deliberated in previous legislative sessions. NDFU remains committed to working with all stakeholders to make any improvements necessary to provide an effective and efficient election process.

We respectfully request a "Do Pass" recommendation on HB 1207. I will stand for any questions.