



Modern Ag Alliance Testimony
North Dakota House of Representatives
Agriculture Committee Hearing 1/23

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Introduction

Good morning, Chairman Beltz, Vice Chairwoman Hauck, and members of the Agriculture Committee. My name is Elizabeth Burns-Thompson, Executive Director of the Modern Ag Alliance—a diverse coalition of 90(+) agricultural groups that advocates for U.S. farmers' continued access to the crop protection tools they need to ensure we have a robust and affordable food supply.

Our coalition proudly includes partners from right here in North Dakota, such as the North Dakota Corn Growers' Association, North Dakota Soybean Growers Association, North Dakota Pulse Growers Association, North Dakota Canola Growers Association, and North Dakota Grain Growers Association. As someone who grew up on a family farm growing corn and soy, it's an honor to be here today to stand with North Dakota farmers in support of House Bill 1318.

Glyphosate's Importance to ND

Agriculture is the backbone of North Dakota's economy, contributing \$14 billion annually and providing jobs for nearly a quarter of the state's population.¹ As you all know, our farmers rely on many tools to sustain their success, with crop protection products being some of the most important.

¹ North Dakota State University, "North Dakota Agriculture Industry Economic Contribution Analysis," 2022, <https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/sites/default/files/2022-12/Ag%20Summary%2012-6-2022.pdf>.

Glyphosate-based herbicides are farmers' number one tool to control weeds, keep yields high, and implement conservation practices that use less land and resources. As the leading U.S. producer of wheat, North Dakota relies heavily on glyphosate.² Over half of all wheat acres, 80% of all corn acres, and 92% of all soybean acres depend on glyphosate to control invasive weeds, keep costs low, and ensure we have enough to eat.³

Without glyphosate, input costs for North Dakota farmers—facing already challenging market conditions—could more than double.⁴ Those costs would inevitably be passed on in the form of higher food prices to consumers who are still reeling from the effects of historic inflation.

Safety and Regulatory Certainty

For over 50 years, glyphosate has been a proven, trusted tool for farmers helping them reduce crop losses and stay competitive in a global marketplace. Glyphosate's safety has been consistently reaffirmed by regulators here in the U.S. and across the globe, including as recently as 2023.⁵ Backed by over 1,500 studies and five decades of research, glyphosate-based herbicides are among the most thoroughly tested agricultural products available.

Yet, despite the clear science behind glyphosate's safety and benefits, a lack of legislative certainty has invited the litigation industry to file tens of thousands of lawsuits fueled by over \$100 million in expansive marketing and TV ads. This uncertainty has also enabled efforts in states like California to regulate pesticides in a manner inconsistent with federal law, congressional intent, and scientific consensus. This has created unsustainable realities that could threaten the future of glyphosate and other critical innovations.

House Bill 1318 protects access to these critical tools by ensuring certainty and consistency in pesticide labeling regulations. This bill would simply ensure any pesticide registered with the EPA—and sold under a label consistent with the EPA's own determinations—is sufficient to satisfy requirements for health and safety warnings. It does not preclude anyone from suing pesticide manufacturers. In other words, **House Bill 1318 would protect farmers from another layer of conflicting government bureaucracy and stand behind the strong, science-based processes already in place today.**

Conclusion

We all know that farmers already have enough on their plates without having to navigate the potential loss of another critical tool in their toolboxes. House Bill 1318 helps keep things simple

² USDA National Agriculture Statistics Services, “2023 State Agricultural Overview, North Dakota,” https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=NORTH%20DAKOTA

³ Aimpoint Research/The Directions Group, “Farm Bill Programs and the Role of Crop Protection Tools,” <https://report-directionsgroup.com/farm-bill/>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Bayer, “Glyphosate Safety Record,” <https://www.bayer.com/en/is-glyphosate-safe>.

and ensures they can focus on what they do best: growing the food, fuel, and fiber we all depend on.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify and thank you for standing up for North Dakota farmers. I welcome any of your questions.