



**Testimony of Laura Lacher
Economic Development Association of North Dakota
In Support of HB 1332
January 23, 2025**

Chair Beltz and members of the House Agriculture Committee:

My name is Laura Lacher, and I am the executive director of the Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND). I want to express our support for HB 1332 relating to appropriation for agriculture infrastructure grants to support new or existing value-added agriculture businesses.

EDND represents more than 80 state economic development organizations on the front line of economic development efforts throughout North Dakota. The organization's primary purpose is to promote the creation of new wealth throughout North Dakota to develop more vibrant and efficient communities and improve quality of life.

EDND believes smart, efficient infrastructure that gives North Dakota the capacity to grow is critically important to the health and vitality of North Dakota. Our members support robust funding options to support local infrastructure projects and the state growth from these projects.

The agriculture infrastructure grants will help develop and enhance North Dakota businesses, farmers and communities through the support of critical and timely infrastructure development. This funding will create opportunities and upgrades that will increase the supply of North Dakota agriculture products, enhance the supply chain resilience, and help grow and sustain North Dakota's heritage industry – agriculture. The long-term success of our state depends on new markets and the sustainability of our rural communities.

Thank you for taking the time to discuss HB 1332 and infrastructure support for our communities. EDND and our member communities urge you to support much-needed funding for our agriculture businesses. Thank you.