

1/23/25

Chairman Beltz, and members of the committee.

My name is Brad Nilson from Hoople ND. My partners and I raise certified seed potatoes, wheat and soybeans. I also represent the Northland Potatoes Growers Association on the North Dakota State Seed Commission.

I am here to ask for your support on HB1332 to provide additional infrastructure funding for the \$450,000,000-\$500,000,000 Agristo French fry plant to be constructed in Grand Forks, ND, beginning with site preparations this spring.

I have had the privilege to get to know the Agristo family over the last 3 years. When they first met with growers to see if there would be interest in producing for them and if there was land available, the response was overwhelming. Their next question was, will we as a foreign company named Agristo be welcome in our area? Will our culture be accepted in your communities? They shared their philosophy with the growers: Employees are #1, Growers are #2 and their customers are #3. Growers are excited with Agristo's business philosophy and look forward to profitable relationship for all.

Last week Agristo hosted 20 plus seed growers and potato industry people, including myself, for a week in Belgium and in the Netherlands to tour 2 of their processing facilities and visit with various seed growers and potato breeding companies. It was quickly apparent that what they had been saying in all the meetings about their philosophy, culture and stewardship the last years is exactly what they are about. Their factories were efficient, large, very clean, quiet and produced no odors. Their employee average age was 34 years. Retention of employees was very high, with most employees moving on to better jobs within the company.

Agristo will produce 300,000 mt of finished product per year. They will need 12 million cwt of raw potatoes per year, approximately 28-32 thousand acres. Those acres will require an additional 2,500-3,000 acres of seed potatoes that will be produced mostly in North Dakota. They will employ 300-350 people. Completion of the Agristo french fry plant is expected by the first half of 2028.

In closing I firmly believe Agristo offers great opportunities to not only the ag industries in North Dakota, but will also be of great benefit to our surrounding communities.

Thank you and I would welcome any questions