



# North Dakota House of Representatives

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## Representative Ty Dressler

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**COMMITTEES:**  
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January 30, 2025

Chairman Beltz and members of the House Ag Committee:

For the record, my name is Ty Dressler and I represent District 36 in the House of Representatives. District 36 stretches from the edge of Dickinson to Judson along I-94. I'm here in front of you today to introduce HB 1509.

This is an agricultural producer-focused bill. It has to do with the process farmers must undertake to request a refund of their check-off dollars from the ND Oilseed Council. Through the years, I've talked with numerous farmers who are frustrated with the current process. Currently, there exists a two-step process of first submitting a written request for a refund application within 60 days of the assessment, then submitting this application along with documentation of the assessment within 90 days of the assessment. This bill would ease that burden on the producer, allowing them 1 year to ask for their money back. Also, HB 1509 requires that the Council place the form on their website so that is easily accessible. The final part codifies that the Council would then issue the refund within 30 days of receiving the request. Currently I don't see a timeframe listed in Century Code for the refund.

Placing the form online, on the Council's website will be quite easy to do, as they already have a website that contains other forms relating to first-purchasers becoming certified. Also, I believe the ND Beef Commission has their refund form on their website, so there is precedence in this matter.

My intent is NOT to harm any councils. I recognize the value of the Oilseed Council in promotion, education, and research of these crops. I have grown flax before and did not request any refunds and I do the same with my beef

cattle. We are focusing only on the process the farmer must adhere to regarding a voluntary program and trying to lessen that burden. I also recognize there may be some concerns over how the Council may handle budgeting. I, however, have to stress that this bill does not change the process that a first-purchaser must use to administer this program. They will continue to collect the assessment on behalf of the Council and send in the reports and assessment dollars on a quarterly basis.

If more refunds are requested, though, it may mean a few different things:

1. The process was too onerous on the producer before these changes, or
2. The producer may have some issues with how the money is being spent,  
or
3. The producer is in hard economic times and needs every dollar to make ends meet.

I believe this is a simple, straightforward bill, simplifying a process and adding transparency for all parties involved. Mr. Chair, thank you for your consideration and I'll stand for questions.