



HOUSE BILL NO. 1531
AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
MIKE BELTZ, CHAIR
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1531

Chairman Beltz and members of the House Agriculture Committee. I am Parrell Grossman, and it is my privilege to be the Legislative Director for the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association. I appear on behalf of the Association in support of House Bill 1531.

The Association advocates for more than 8,900 operations that raise soybeans in North Dakota. In 2024, North Dakota farmers planted 6.6 million acres of soybeans, producing over 245 million bushels of soybeans.

According to a 2022 North Dakota Agriculture Industry Economic Contribution Analysis conducted by NDSU, the economic contribution to North Dakota is \$30.8 billion, including \$18.8 billion from direct output and \$12 billion from secondary output.

The provisions and purpose of this legislation are clear and the need for this study and information should be equally clear.

Some quick research reveals that benefits of irrigation on farmland could include increased crop yields, improved crop quality, reduced reliance on rainfall, and expanded crop options. Less than one percent of soybean acreage is currently irrigated. Some years, the right moisture during pod fill in August would significantly improve yield.

By providing a consistent and controlled water supply, irrigation can significantly boost crop production, resulting in higher yields and potentially increased revenue for farmers. Consistent moisture levels can enhance overall quality in many crops, supporting higher prices in the market. Irrigation can minimize the impact of

unpredictable or unreliable rainfall patterns, ensuring a more stable and reliable crop production. Irrigation ultimately could allow farmers to cultivate a broader variety of crops, which could increase crop diversity and profitability.

This legislation would fund a study that could confirm or quantify these irrigation benefits in terms of potential economic benefits of increased irrigation and water conveyance in rural North Dakota. In addition, the study would provide the economic distribution between irrigated and non-irrigated land, which will be helpful information.

Connecting the likely or commonly understood benefits of irrigation to study results or conclusions is analogous to an academic instructor not accepting a student's correct answer without showing their work. If the study confirms or reveals the economic contributions, then the state can decide whether or how to implement expanded irrigation in North Dakota. That ultimately could benefit our farmers and crop production. This in turn would increase the agricultural economic contribution in this state.

For the reasons stated, the Association respectfully asks the House Agriculture Committee to give House Bill 1531 a "Do Pass" recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration.