

Trista Gemar
9953 83rd St SE
Fullerton, ND 58441
trista@drtel.net

RE: HB 1591 County Fair Resiliency Grant

Dear Members of the House Agriculture Committee:

As a former 4-H member, current leader and volunteer, and parent of very active 4-H members, I am writing to express my strong support for funding infrastructure at county fairs, which play a critical role in supporting 4-H programs and promoting agricultural education across our state and counties. Not only do county fairs support 4-H, but they also provide many entertainment options, such as rodeos, music events, and more, that bring families, neighbors and outside communities together. Investments in these facilities not only ensure their longevity but also strengthen the positive impact they have on our youth, families and communities.

4-H programs provide unparalleled opportunities for young people to develop leadership, responsibility, and life skills while engaging in hands-on projects that foster a deep appreciation for agriculture and community service. County fairs are the cornerstone of these efforts, serving as a platform for youth to showcase their hard work, gain confidence and build valuable connections with their peers, mentors, and the broader community.

Unfortunately, many county fairgrounds face an aging infrastructure that limits their ability to meet the growing needs of 4-H programs and simply maintain what we have. For example, in Dickey County, the commercial building that is used for static exhibits, community events such as weddings, and other community events, needs major improvements specifically in the restrooms. The restrooms have been out of order for several years now, forcing the fair board to move in portable restrooms during the fair due to lack of funding to repair the plumbing. The current electrical situation doesn't support the campers, with breakers consistently blowing. The showering facilities are in desperate need of improvement. In the past 3 years that I have camped at the fairgrounds with my children, I have taken very quick, freezing cold showers. In the livestock barn, the last few years have seen an increase in youth exhibiting animals. A barn full of animals, youth and families is a great site to see. However, with this growth comes challenges. Not only is space an issue in the barn, but space is also an issue in the wash rack, tie-outs, and showring. Improvements are also needed to ensure the health and safety of both animals and participants. Adequate airflow and ventilation are critical for maintaining appropriate temperatures, reducing stress on animals and promoting overall well-being. A shelter structure to be built over the showring and spectator stands has been in the discussion for the last few years, but again, lack of funding is the issue for each one of these repairs and improvements. Improvements like these would not only benefit the 4-H participants, but also the wide range of local organizations and events that could utilize these spaces year-round.

Investing in county infrastructure is also an investment in the county's economic vitality. County fairs bring significant economic activity to rural communities by attracting visitors, creating jobs,

and supporting local businesses. Moreover, they inspire the next generation of agricultural leaders and innovators, the continued success of our state and county's agricultural sector.

I respectfully urge you to prioritize funding for county fair infrastructure funding, voting in favor of HB 1591. Your support will empower our 4-H programs, enhance educational opportunities for our youth, and strengthen the communities you represent.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trista Gemar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Trista Gemar