

Good Morning,

Chairperson and members of the committee,

My name is Breana Kiser, and I am writing to express my strong support for HB1591. This critical legislation presents a vital opportunity to invest in county fairground infrastructure, directly benefiting 4-H programs, livestock exhibitors, and the broader community.

As a representative of Dickey County 4-H, I have witnessed firsthand the growing needs of our participants and the infrastructure challenges county fairs face. Over the years, 4-H enrollment has steadily increased, with more youth bringing livestock projects and engaging in fair activities. However, our fairgrounds struggle with outdated barns, limited space, and inadequate facilities to meet these growing demands.

Many of our barns, originally built decades ago, were not designed to accommodate the current volume and variety of livestock projects. Structural decay, including deteriorating framing posts, threatens the integrity of these barns, which are essential for housing animals safely.

Additionally, inadequate ventilation, shade, and cooling systems leave livestock vulnerable to extreme summer temperatures.

The livestock show ring, where both the annual 4-H livestock show and open-class livestock competitions take place, is fully exposed to the blistering sun and heat of North Dakota summers. This creates significant risks not only for animal welfare but also for youth exhibitors who work tirelessly to prepare and present their projects. To ensure the safety of both youth and livestock, it is imperative to invest in stable, well-designed barns and the construction of a shade structure over the show ring.

Beyond the fair itself, investing in year-round facilities would maximize the fairgrounds' value for the entire community. Upgraded, multi-use buildings could host 4-H events, educational workshops, and large community gatherings throughout the year. These improvements would foster greater engagement, support lifelong learning opportunities, and strengthen the fairgrounds' role as a central hub for the county. Enhanced facilities could also serve as venues for winter livestock workshops, STEM programs, and even emergency shelters when needed.

The funding proposed in HB1591 offers counties a much-needed opportunity to address these pressing infrastructure issues. Modernized fairgrounds will not only enhance the experience of 4-H members and livestock exhibitors but will also provide long-term benefits to the broader community by creating safer, more versatile, and accessible spaces. This funding is not just an investment in physical structures—it is an investment in our youth, our agricultural heritage, and the future of our rural communities.

I strongly urge your support for HB1591 to ensure that county fairs can continue to provide meaningful opportunities for young people while strengthening the fabric of rural life. Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Breana Kiser

Breana Kiser
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