



Testimony of Darwin Wilke
Bowman County Fair Association
In Favor of HB 1591
January 30, 2025

Dear Chairman Beltz and Committee Members,

I am writing to express our strong support for the bill currently under consideration to provide funding and resources for county fairs across our state. As members of our community who deeply value the role our county fair plays in our culture and economy, we urge you to consider the long-term benefits that supporting county fairs can have for rural communities, agriculture, and local economies.

County fairs have long been a cornerstone of our state's agricultural heritage, serving as a platform for showcasing local talent, 4-H programs, and youth activities. These events are not only an opportunity to celebrate our agricultural traditions but also county fairs foster a sense of community, bringing people together to enjoy rodeos, demolition derbies, and each other's company. They promote educational opportunities, preserve traditions, and provide a venue for families to bond over fun, entertainment, and competition. The fairs also play a pivotal role in educating younger generations about agriculture and the importance of this industry in our community and our state.

Unfortunately, many county fairs face significant challenges when it comes to maintaining and upgrading their facilities. Aging infrastructure, inadequate facilities, and a lack of funding can limit the ability of county fairs to expand and improve the experience for attendees, exhibitors, and vendors. By supporting capital improvements, this bill would provide the necessary resources to modernize fairgrounds, improve safety, enhance accessibility, and ultimately strengthen the sustainability of these vital community events. Improved facilities will help preserve the legacy of county fairs, ensuring that future generations continue to enjoy and learn from these essential events.

I strongly urge you to support this bill, as it would provide critical funding for the capital improvements needed to strengthen our county fairs and ensure they remain an integral part of our state's cultural and economic fabric.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Darwin Wilke", is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Darwin Wilke, President
Bowman County Fair Association