

I am writing in favor of HB1591.

As the President of the Dickey County Fair Board in Ellendale, I cannot emphasize enough how important a program like this can be to our local, rural fairs. Currently our fair is eligible to receive funding through our county via a mill levy. That, paired with exhaustive fundraising by a volunteer board, is how we provide the entertainment, community meal and awards for our youth achievement each year. But that does not give us room to make improvements or the ability to save to fund for large capital projects. As a result we are forced to take out higher-interest loans in order to make necessary structural changes to our fair. For instance, we are in the process of building a community-use building with accessible bathrooms. The estimated cost of the project is \$175,000. We received a grant for approx. \$35,000, leaving us to get a loan for the remainder.

For our rural communities, what ends up happening is that our local businesses get tasked with the heavy ask of supporting our fair through donations and in-kind offerings, when they are already being hit hard with requests from local students, organizations and non-profits. In today's economy, we know that those dollars don't go nearly as far as they used to, no matter how hard we try to sharpen our pencils.

Our current fair yearly budget is roughly \$120,000. Almost half of that comes through yearly gifts and sponsorships. This makes planning for the future almost impossible. We are currently in dire need of a new barn facility for our 4-H animals and livestock shows. The project is estimated to cost between \$500,000 and \$750,000. I'm not certain how we could ever afford this...yet, in order to provide our community with what is needed for livestock safety, as well as the safety of the community during our fair, we will need to find a way. This bill would be a great start to alleviate that burden on our local businesses, while giving our fairs an opportunity to make some much-needed capital repairs.

Thank you,

Val Wagner

Monango, ND

Dickey County Fair Board President