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**Testimony of
Matt Perdue
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
House Appropriations Committee – Education and Environment Division
January 15, 2025**

Chairman Nathe and members of the division,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill No. 1020. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union's (NDFU) members. NDFU supports the Department of Water Resources's request to allocate funding for a general counsel.

Water is a vital resource for North Dakota's farmers and ranchers. Agriculture contributes over \$30 billion to North Dakota's economy. Protecting our state's water rights are critical to the future success of our agriculture industry and the state's economy, as a whole.

NDFU is increasingly concerned about threats to our state's control over our water resources. Outside interests, including other states and provinces and out-of-state water districts have been attempting to secure rights over our water for years. Proposals to take additional water from the Missouri River have become more frequent. This poses a threat to North Dakota's farmers and ranchers.

An in-house general counsel will give the Department of Water Resources the expertise and capacity to protect our water rights. We strongly encourage you to make this investment and protect our state's most vital resource.

Thank you for your consideration.