

**Testimony of Duane DeKrey, General Manager
Garrison Diversion Conservancy District
HB 1020
House Appropriations Committee – Education & Environment Division
Bismarck, North Dakota – January 30, 2025**

Representative Nathe and members of the House Education and Environment Division, thank you for the opportunity to support House Bill 1020, the ND Department of Water Resources budget. I am Duane DeKrey, General Manager for the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion).

Because we recognize the value irrigation development brings to North Dakota through increased land values, decreased risk, an increase in crop production, and a positive economic impact, irrigation development is a high priority for Garrison Diversion.

The McClusky Canal was constructed as part of the Garrison Diversion Unit authorized in 1965 and was designed to irrigate up to 250,000 acres. The original project scope was revised through the Garrison Diversion Reformulation Act of 1986 and the Dakota Water Resources Act of 2000, and, as a result, irrigation acres were decreased. Currently, 23,700 acres of irrigation are authorized along the McClusky Canal through the Dakota Water Resources Act.

In an effort to utilize the authorized acres along the McClusky Canal, Garrison Diversion has been working with producers since 2010 to expand irrigation development through the McClusky Canal Irrigation Project, successfully utilizing Missouri River water from the McClusky Canal. Multiple projects have been completed, and to date, there are approximately 8,000 developed irrigated acres in the McClusky Canal Irrigation Project, with an additional 6,500 acres in the planning phases of development.

Funding from the Department of Water Resources is essential to further irrigation development. Without it, these irrigation projects are not feasible, as irrigator costs would be

too high to be considered profitable. A study completed by North Dakota State University in 2014 determined that for every \$1 invested in irrigation by the state, \$7 is returned.

Irrigation benefits to North Dakota are widespread, and the State's investment is important in realizing the irrigation potential of the McClusky Canal. Please help us keep future irrigation projects affordable by providing \$5.0M in the Department of Water Resources budget for irrigation development.

Thank you for your consideration.