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Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Tom Ross, and I am the Mayor of Minot. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today in support of the North Dakota State Fair.

Minot is proud to be the home of the North Dakota State Fair. While the actual State Fair takes place during 10 days in July, the Fair and its facilities are vital components of our community year round. The State Fairgrounds play an important role in the ongoing success of Minot as a community and of the surrounding region, as well.

The State Fair is requesting funding for critical infrastructure projects with the intention of improving the safety and overall atmosphere for every user and visitor of the State Fairgrounds. We strongly support the State Fair's commitment to providing a safe environment for events at the Fairgrounds, whether that be during the State Fair or at the litany of other events that are held at the Fairgrounds.

Public safety is paramount to the success of large events like the State Fair. Working with the Department of Homeland Security, State Fair officials have identified areas of concern, and have created a plan to offer a safer environment, purchase new equipment, replace outdated items, and support to overall goal of mitigating risks for everyone attending events at the State Fairgrounds.

In addition, construction of a new restroom facility is included in this funding request. Camping during the State Fair continues to expand due to increasing attendance and livestock numbers as well as spacing requirements. This has created an immediate need to accommodate the growing number of 4-H and FFA families who stay on site during the State Fair.

These improvements will assist the State Fair's mission of providing year-round benefits to Minot and surrounding communities through safety enhancements and expanded facilities and infrastructure.

On behalf of the Minot City Council and the City of Minot, I offer my strong support for the State Fair's requested funding for investments in the overall safety and comfort of visitors and users of the State Fairgrounds facilities.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.