

January 29, 2025

Chairman Monson and members of the House Appropriations – Government Operations Committee, my name is Zeena Christopher. My family and our businesses would like to express our strong support of House Bill 1009, the budget of the department of agriculture.

Our family owns two small businesses in North Dakota that are strongly impacted by the work of the North Dakota Department of Agriculture.

One of our businesses is Machinery Management Service, Inc out of Hankinson, ND. We disassemble agricultural machinery for exporters, and we handle the logistics of shipping machinery all over the world. Many countries are becoming quarantine clean countries and require us to thoroughly clean the machines, inside and out and obtain a phytosanitary inspections and certificates from the USDA. Without the team from the Department of Ag assisting us with these inspections and certification, we would not be able to compete in the industry. We have worked with inspectors in several states and the team from North Dakota is by far the best we have worked with, being very knowledgeable, professional, and yet flexible to help meet our sailing schedules.

Our other business is Bob Wallace Orchards, LLC. We are a family run winery that just opened a couple of years ago. We have been so blessed to have the ND Department of Agriculture sponsor the Pride of Dakota shows in several cities in the state. This has given us the exposure needed to get our business started and growing. The POD shows have been a catapult for many small businesses in North Dakota and the exposure we receive is amazing! The customers talk about the shows all year long just waiting for them each year.

Without these services and programs, our businesses would not be what they are today. We greatly appreciate the work and support the department of agriculture gives us.

Thank you for your time. I would encourage you to pass HB 1009.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zeena Christopher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "Z".

Zeena Christopher