



SENATE BILL NO. 2228  
HOUSE FINANCE AND TAXATION COMMITTEE  
CRAIG HEADLAND, CHAIR  
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF ENGROSSED SENATE BILL 2228  
MARCH 17, 2025

Chairman Headland and members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee, I am Parrell Grossman, and it is my privilege to be the Legislative Director for the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association. I appear in support of Engrossed Senate Bill 2228.

The Association advocates for more than 8,900 operations that raise soybeans in North Dakota. In 2024, North Dakota farmers planted 6.6 million acres of soybeans, producing over 245 million bushels of soybeans in North Dakota.

The agricultural economic impact in North Dakota. NDSU's 2024 North Dakota Agriculture Industry Economic Contribution Analysis reported that the economic contribution to North Dakota is \$41.3 billion, including \$26 billion from direct output and \$15.3 billion from secondary output. The report also concluded that this economic contribution included 46,620 direct jobs and 76,740 secondary jobs for total jobs of 123,360.

The Association expresses strong support for Engrossed Senate Bill No. 2228, which seeks to establish an appropriation for a Rural Grocery Store Sustainability and Food Access Expansion Grant Program under the Department of Commerce. This legislation is an important step toward ensuring that North Dakota's rural communities continue to have access to essential food supplies and economic stability.

Rural grocery stores are the backbone of small communities in providing access to fresh and nutritious food and supporting local economies. Our rural communities certainly value their local gas stations and convenience stores. However, many rural grocery stores are facing increasing financial challenges, including increasing operational costs, possible supply chain disruptions, and population decline. Without support, these stores are at risk of closure, leaving residents with limited food access and forcing them to travel long distances to purchase basic food and other necessities, help provide a sense of independence

Further, these grocery stores sustain critical food access for rural residents, particularly the elderly, disabled, or others without reliable transportation and, without doubt, help provide these more vulnerable residents with a sense of independence. Something as simple as a grocery store

can allow these individuals the dignity and pleasure of remaining in communities they love and in which they have often lived their entire lives.

As I thought about this legislation, I was reminded that many residents in urban areas of North Dakota have so many choices of grocery stores alone. In Bismarck, in most grocery stores I can choose from at least ten selections of milks, breads, ice creams, fruits and vegetables, and so forth. I can also purchase over-the-counter cold medicines for my grandchildren when the pharmacies are closed. Rural communities are or would be grateful to have just **one** grocery store.

We are fortunate to have so many farmers, ranchers, and ag producers of all kinds contributing to our economy, as well as the other rural residents that provide support and services to these communities, whether law enforcement, schoolteachers, or business owners. The Association, along with our rural partners, searches for some avenues or assistance to retain or attract these rural grocery stores. This proposed legislation and funding assistance appears a reasonable alternative to obtain or provide this much-needed assistance.

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Finance and Taxation Committee, the Association respectfully urges you to give Engrossed Senate Bill 2228 a “Do Pass” recommendation.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be pleased to answer any questions.