



**In Opposition to HB 1493**  
**House Industry, Business and Labor**  
**February 11, 2025**

Chairman Warrey and Committee members:

For the record, my name is Lesley Icenogle. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the North Dakota Corn Growers Association (NDCGA) in opposition to House Bill 1493.

North Dakota has a widespread labor shortage that is particularly acute in agriculture. The state simply does not have enough people to fill its labor needs. Legal, foreign-born workers are part of the solution. The seasonal H2A and H2B visa programs are critical for farmers across commodities and further down the value chain. According to Job Service North Dakota, H2A applications have increased from 327 in 2013 to 1,097 in 2023, and H2B applications have increased from 45 to 155.

HB 1493 eliminates the Office of Legal Immigration created by the 68<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. This removes an important resource for employers at a time when workforce is a major challenge. The Office of Legal Immigration completed a thorough study during the interim to guide their work this biennium; it does not make sense to discard this investment.

NDCGA urges a Do Not Pass recommendation on HB 1493 to continue supporting legal immigration as a workforce solution. Thank you for your consideration.