Testimony of Marc Knisley
Executive Vice President, AgCountry Business Development
Senate Appropriations Committee - Government Operations Division
SB-2018
January 15, 2025

Chairman Wanzek and members of Senate Appropriations, Government Operations Division. My name is Marc Knisley and on behalf of AgCountry Farm Credit Services, I'd like to express our support for bill number SB-2018, as it relates to funding the expansion of Grand Farm's innovation campus.

AgCountry Farm Credit Services [AgCountry], a farmer-owned cooperative, is a leading provider of financial services to agriculture and rural communities. We are deeply committed to supporting initiatives that foster agricultural progress and innovation. Our partnership with Grand Farm exemplifies this commitment and highlights our shared vision for the future of agriculture.

Grand Farm is at the forefront of advancing innovation in agriculture. They have built a vast ecosystem of partners focused on enabling and advancing AgTech innovation. Their efforts in research and technology are crucial for the future of agriculture, addressing some of the industry's most significant challenges. By fostering collaboration among producers, industry leaders, higher education institutions, and government agencies, Grand Farm creates a dynamic environment for innovation.

The expansion of Grand Farm's Innovation Campus will drive significant economic activity and job creation in North Dakota. It will attract global AgTech leaders, foster workforce development, and position North Dakota as a global hub for agricultural innovation. This investment will also provide economic development opportunities for underserved communities and rural areas.

Our partnership with Grand Farm included a significant financial commitment to their initial capital campaign, which has been crucial in developing their new site and facility near Castleton, ND. We have utilized the Grand Farm facility to host innovation events for AgCountry customers and employees, creating a collaborative environment that benefits all stakeholders. Furthermore, we have actively collaborated with other members of the Grand Farm ecosystem, enhancing our collective efforts to drive agricultural innovation.

Based on our customer research, 55% of farmers within the AgCountry footprint consider themselves early innovators. Currently, 9% of these farmers use AI technologies or AI-enabled software, and 7% use robots for field or livestock work to reduce labor. However, there is significant interest in adopting these technologies, with 46% of farmers planning to adopt AI technologies and 49% interested in using robots for field and livestock work. These statistics highlight the growing interest and potential for AI and robotic technologies in agriculture, underscoring the importance of Grand Farm's role in facilitating this technological adoption.

Farmers look to AgCountry as a trusted source of innovation information, relying on us to provide best practices that enhance productivity and profitability in their businesses. Our collaboration with Grand Farm enables us to support our farmers more effectively by providing access to cutting-edge research and technological advancements.
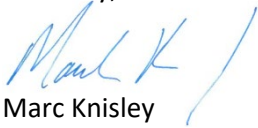
The missions of AgCountry and Grand Farm are closely aligned, with both organizations dedicated to advancing agriculture and supporting rural communities. Our broader role involves advocating for advancements that

benefit agriculture and rural America, ensuring that our farmers and ranchers have access to the latest technologies and best practices.

In conclusion, AgCountry strongly supports Grand Farm's request for funding to expand their Innovation Campus. This investment will have a profound impact on the agricultural industry, the farmers we serve, and the broader North Dakota community. We urge the legislature's approval of this funding request and help drive the future of agricultural innovation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Marc Knisley
Executive Vice President
AgCountry Business Development
President and CEO