

January 15, 2025

Honorable Senator Bekkedahl
Senate Appropriations – Government Ops Division
North Dakota Legislative Council
State Capitol
600 East Boulevard
Bismarck, ND 58505-0360

Dear Senate Appropriations – Government Ops Division, Senator Bekkedahl, Chairman:

Western Region Economic Development (WRED), representing Divide, McKenzie, Mountrail, and Williams Counties of North Dakota, **supports SB2020** with the inclusion specifically of the SBARE priority of capital improvement projects for the Nesson Valley facility and storage shed of the NDSU Williston Research Extension Center to carryover the \$1.7 million for Nesson Valley and the \$475,000 for the storage shed in general funds appropriated by the 68th Legislative Assembly. WRED supports to enact the special fund authority for both projects but **does not agree to the funding caps**. WRED requests that instead these caps be raised to ensure that the projects can be completed given that NDAES was unable to get any successful bids for the projects in the 2023-2025 biennium.

The Nesson Valley Irrigation Research and Development Project is located 27 miles from Williston and the irrigation staff currently utilize a small office and bathroom in a chemical storage building.

A Research and Technology Transfer and Research facility to include a heated shop, restrooms, and an employee break room as well as office and lab space and a conference room for irrigation conferences and grower meetings is needed to support the expansion of irrigation and food processing industries in western North Dakota.

Expanded agricultural economic development in western North Dakota will be driven mostly by expanded irrigation research and development as the catalyst to promote new and expanded production of high value crops and irrigated agricultural processing capability. The MonDak Irrigation Frontier has the potential to expand to 500,000 acres.

WRED strongly encourages this committee to approve the carryover of \$1,700,000 for the Nesson Valley Facility, \$475,000 for the storage shed, and **enact the special fund authority as needed to complete these projects** along with providing **full funding** of the budget request for the NDSU Williston Research Extension.

Sincerely,



Ann Kvande
Executive Officer