

Chair Senator Wanzek and members of the Senate Appropriations - Government Operations Division,

My name is Shannon Duerr, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Cavalier County Job Development Authority (JDA). I also sit on the advisory council for the Langdon Research Extension Center. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 2020. This bill is vital to maintaining and enhancing North Dakota's agricultural infrastructure and supporting the long-term success of our growers, seed companies, and our rural communities.

The Cavalier County JDA oversees our county's strategic plan, which includes seven key benchmarks to guide development. One of these benchmarks is agriculture, a reflection of its critical importance to our local economy and community. SB 2020's funding for a seed cleaning plant at the Langdon station aligns with this priority by addressing several key areas that directly impact the agricultural sector:

1. **Providing growers with the highest quality seed available** High-quality seed is the foundation of successful crop production. SB 2020 ensures growers have access to superior foundation seed, which leads to better yields, improved crop quality, and enhanced profitability. For North Dakota farmers, this is not just an advantage but a necessity to remain competitive in a global market.
2. **Supporting ND seed companies through foundation seed** SB 2020 provides seed companies with the foundation seed necessary to produce registered seed in the second year and certified seed in the third year. This cycle not only ensures a steady supply of high-quality seed for producers but also sustains the operations of seed companies—a vital component of our state's agricultural economy.
3. **Providing funding for county crop improvement associations** By supporting crop improvement associations, this bill enables these organizations to fund critical agricultural programs such as 4-H initiatives and agricultural scholarships. These programs play a pivotal role in educating the next generation of farmers and agricultural leaders, securing the future of this essential industry.
4. **Ensuring workplace safety for seedsmen** SB 2020 includes provisions to address safety hazards identified during annual inspections at seed stations. Eliminating these dangers is essential to providing a safe working environment for our seedsmen, who are indispensable to the success of North Dakota agriculture. No one should have to risk their safety to perform the critical work of seed production.

Agriculture is the backbone of North Dakota's economy and communities, particularly in counties like Cavalier, where it remains a cornerstone of our strategic vision for growth and development. By investing in the safety, quality, and sustainability of our agricultural infrastructure, SB 2020 will strengthen our rural communities and ensure the continued success of this vital industry.

I urge you to support SB 2020 and its critical investments in North Dakota agriculture. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Shannon Duerr, Executive Director
Cavalier County Job Development Authority