

Senate Bill 2020

Senate Appropriations – Government Operations Division

January 16, 2025

Chairman Wanzek and members of the Senate Appropriations – Government Operations Division Committee

For the record, my name is Seth Arndorfer and I am the chief executive officer of Dakota Carrier Network, a statewide fiber optic network. Most in the state know us simply as “DCN.” DCN is a limited liability corporation formed by the 13 independent rural broadband service providers that deliver internet, television, and other technology solutions to North Dakotans in nearly every community in our state. In partnership with our Owners, DCN provides internet and Ethernet connectivity to the majority of North Dakota’s anchor institutions, including higher education facilities, over 160 bank locations, all 54 hospitals in the state, and many other commercial entities. Through competitive contracts, DCN was chosen by the State of North Dakota to provide internet connectivity for all public K-12 schools, state colleges and universities, county and state government buildings, National Guard armories, and 911 public safety answering points. DCN has delivered these services to the state since 2000. On a personal note, I am also a farm and ranch kid from Adams County.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, Dakota Carrier Network asks you to give Senate Bill 2020 a “Do Pass” recommendation and support the Senate’s adoption of it.

DCN has been fortunate to work very closely with NDSU and the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station in a public-private partnership on a precision agriculture pilot project. At its core, precision agriculture allows producers to decrease expenses and increase profit by using technology to do things like manage crop and livestock production and improve efficiency and effectiveness. Implementing precision agriculture and its associated research is highly data-intensive, necessitating a transformation of agricultural systems to enable robust data collection, secure transfer and storage, and advanced, high-performance analytics. This digital transformation is essential for maintaining North Dakota’s position as a national leader in agriculture.

This is high-stakes research and DCN has worked with sites ranging from the NDSU campus to the Hettinger Research Extension Center to deploy technologies like a private 5G network so researchers can be confident their data is secure. These teams are doing research that is crucial to the future of agriculture – and particularly precision agriculture – and helping North Dakota ag producers succeed.

The benefits of their research extend beyond the farm – it is laying a strong foundation to help bring new, innovative organizations and well-established international companies to our state. But producers can't make these breakthroughs on their own; they need the research and knowledge provided by the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station so that North Dakota can continue to be a leader in feeding and fueling the world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your time and consideration on this important legislation. DCN encourages a Do Pass for SB2020 which will support critical research in precision agriculture. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

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