



**In Support of SB 2020**  
**NDSU Extension Program Initiatives**  
**Senate Appropriations – Government Operations Division**  
**Testimony of Drew Courtney**  
**January 16, 2025**

Chairman Wanzek and members of the Committee,

Again, thank you for the opportunity for the North Dakota Corn Growers Association to testify in support of Senate Bill 2020.

For the record, my name is Drew Courtney. I am a North Dakota Corn Growers Association state board member, a farmer-led membership organization that serves as the voice for the state's corn producers, representing more than 13,000 growers across the state.

As an ag producer near the Oakes area, my family and I see the value that Extension brings to North Dakota. In an existing extension program, for example, one initiative that is especially vital to our community is the Family and Community Wellness position. In our small agricultural community, where access to fresh, affordable food is limited, this role has been instrumental in working to establish a functioning and sustainable food pantry. The dedication and expertise of our Family and Community Wellness Extension Agent have been crucial in driving this project forward, addressing food insecurity, and ultimately enriching the well-being of our residents.

We support SBARE's Extension new initiatives that are before you, especially the Biofuels and Carbon proposal. This initiative will complement the Ag Experiment

Station's research with practical education for farmers as they navigate ever-changing carbon markets. The Extension Carbon Specialist position will provide producers with information and tools to make informed decisions about climate-smart practices and carbon contracts. The market is asking for such sustainable ag production changes, and the North Dakota producer must be able to pivot and adapt to capitalize on what the customer wants. Sustainable aviation fuel demand is projected to be more than twice what the current ethanol market is. For North Dakota farmers to be able to become a part of the supply process, there will be multiple new requirements and many of those are still evolving. It's complex, and the North Dakota grower needs this education and extension resource to rise to the occasion.

Similarly, the Agri biome Initiative will help producers understand microbial biologicals—another complex, rapidly developing market.

Expanding and strengthening animal agriculture in the state is a policy priority for North Dakota Corn Growers. We also support the Precision Management and Animal Health Initiative, which will protect the well-being of livestock and communities.

Our mission statement is “growing a healthy, profitable business climate for northern corn,” and NDSU Extension is an essential partner to help us meet that charge. Once again, we urge your support for SB 2020.

Thank you for your time today, and I stand to respond to any questions you may have.