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**Testimony of  
Matt Perdue  
North Dakota Farmers Union  
Before the  
Senate Appropriations Committee – Government Operations Division  
January 21, 2025**

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Chairman Wanzek and members of the division,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2151. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union’s members. NDFU supports SB 2151.

During NDFU’s most recent annual convention, our members adopted a special order of business outlining our priorities for this legislative session. Included in that list of priorities is funding for rural roads and bridges. Having a strong rural transportation network is critical to farmers’ and ranchers’ ability to access the market.

According to the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute (UGPTI), 847 county and township bridges need to be replaced in the next 20 years. The cost of those replacements and additional bridge maintenance totals \$1.1 billion over the 20-year period. Because many of those projects are urgent needs, UGPTI calls for \$178 million investment this biennium and each of the next four biennia.<sup>1</sup>

NDFU appreciates the important steps the legislature has taken to address rural infrastructure challenges. However, without significant, routine investments in bridges, we will continue to fall behind. Despite the legislature’s generous support in recent years, our estimated bridge needs grew by nearly \$300 million during the last biennium.<sup>2</sup> SB 2151 will help us catch up to that growing need.

NDFU respectfully requests a “Do Pass” recommendation for SB 2151. I look forward to answering any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Dybing, A., et. al. (2024, October). *Infrastructure Needs: North Dakota’s County, Township and Tribal Roads and Bridges: 2024-2043*. NDSU Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.ugpti.org/resources/reports/downloads/2024-10-infrastructure-needs.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*