



**Testimony in Support of HB 1332
House Appropriations Committee
March 17, 2025**

Chairman Luick and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

My name is Brady Ash and I am writing to you on behalf of Forward Devils Lake Economic Development, to express our strong support for House Bill 1332, which seeks to incentivize the development of value-added agricultural facilities. As an organization dedicated to fostering economic growth and sustainability in the Devils Lake community, we see the continuance in revolutionizing the agricultural world. We also see challenges many rural North Dakota areas are facing as family farms struggle to stay alive.

The creation of value-added agricultural facilities presents an incredible opportunity to generate new wealth for the NE North Dakota region. By processing commodities close to where they are grown, we can keep much of the economic value generated by these crops within our community. Not only will this help our local agricultural producers but it will also be the reason jobs are created in manufacturing and transportation.

The economic impacts of value-added agriculture extend far beyond the farming community. The development of such facilities can create opportunities for downtown revitalization projects, as new workers and businesses are attracted to the region. It creates a ripple effect, improving demand for local services and products and providing much-needed investment into local infrastructure. In addition, it helps bolster the housing market as workers seek residences, which can be particularly beneficial for areas struggling with population decline and an increased need for affordable housing.

This creation of new wealth in the form of tax revenue and new employment opportunities supports our school districts, public services, and local amenities. The reinvestment in education, healthcare, and public infrastructure ensures that our children will have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive for the years ahead.

House Bill 1332 is an investment in the long-term future of our rural communities. These types of projects are essential to maintaining and growing our agricultural industry while addressing the economic challenges that have threatened the sustainability of our communities for decades. We believe that by creating new wealth through value-added agriculture, we can help turn a positive corner for not only the agricultural sector but also for our towns, schools, and families.

In closing, it is strongly encouraged that the committee considers the potential of House Bill 1332 and its ability to create positive impacts on North Dakota's rural communities. It will be exciting to partner with the state in bringing these projects to life and ensuring a brighter future for our farmers, businesses, and families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brady Ash", is written over a white background.

Brady Ash

Executive Director

Forward Devils Lake Economic Development