



North Dakota Senate

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COMMITTEES:
Appropriations

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Good afternoon, Chairman Luick and the Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee. I am pleased to be here to introduce SB 2157. This idea started over a year ago as I was visiting with some patrons about all the farm accidents that have occurred in our county over the last few years. The number is quite staggering. We have lost a high school worker to a power wire entanglement with a sprayer, we have lost several farmers to tractor mishaps, we have lost several farmers to grain bin entrapments, and also loss of life from well falls, balers and other large equipment entanglements. We have also suffered a variety of injuries from auger entanglements, skid steer accidents, chemical inhalations and NH3 inhalations with most of these causing permeant disabilities or further health issues. After much thought I thought in may be a good idea to promote safety programs that could provide insurance discounts much like our defensive driving course do with auto insurance.

I ran this idea by the Insurance Commissioner, Jon Godfried, Agriculture Commissioner, Doug Gohring, several of our large farm insurance companies and even the Farm Safety Coordinator from NDSU Extension.

All thought this would be a reasonable idea, but the more we talked, the more we realized that It was not as easy as we thought. One of the biggest challenges is that farm safety covers so many different aspects from equipment operation, PTO and transmission driven equipment, chemical and fertilizer application and grain movement and storage aspects. With so many different types of safety training and awareness that would be needed, it is apparent a single course would not suffice to warrant an insurance premium discount.

Eventually, I came to the conclusion that a "shall" study might be the best solution to find the right way to find meaningful safety training and awareness that would be worthy of an insurance premium discount and provide value to our insurance companies that may allow for that discount. Mr. Chairman I believe this committee can find the best way to implement that study. I would offer a few suggestions for this committee to consider when you discuss this. First, I would hope that the Insurance Commissioner and Agriculture Commissioner would be included as members of that study. It may also be a good idea to appropriate money for an institution like NDSU to aid in the study and/or to do some research into this study. One other idea that I have used in interim committees is to appoint industry experts as non-voting members to the committee. Chairman Luick, that is SB2157 intent is and I would be happy to answer any questions if I could.

