



## **North Dakota Grain Growers Association Testimony in Favor of SB 2161 January 16, 2025**

Chairman Luick, members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee, my name is Ryan Ellis. I am a family farmer from Williston, North Dakota as well as the President of the North Dakota Grain Growers Association. SB 2161 proposes important updates to the structure and funding of the North Dakota Barley Council and North Dakota Wheat Commission. As a farmer-led organization representing wheat and barley growers across the state, the North Dakota Grain Growers Association strongly support these changes.

Senate Bill 2161 makes three key modifications:

1. It allows for more flexibility in filling vacant council seats by permitting at-large appointments when a district lacks an eligible participating producer. This will ensure full representation on the Barley Council even as our industry evolves.
2. It increases the barley checkoff assessment from 20 to 30 mills per bushel. This modest increase will provide critical funding for research, market development, and promotion efforts that benefit all barley growers in North Dakota.
3. Similarly, it raises the wheat checkoff from 15 to 20 mills per bushel. These additional resources will support vital programs for our wheat industry.

These assessment increases are the first in many years for both crops. They reflect the rising costs of conducting impactful research and market development work. The additional funding will allow our state's barley and wheat commissions to expand their efforts in developing new varieties, improving crop quality, exploring new markets, and promoting our products both domestically and internationally.

As farmers, we understand the importance of investing in the future of our industry. These checkoff programs have a proven track record of delivering value back to producers through their various initiatives. The proposed increases will ensure this important work can continue and expand to meet the evolving needs of our industry.

Therefore the North Dakota Grain Growers Association respectfully requests your support for Senate Bill 2161 as the bill is proposed. This legislation will strengthen the ability of our barley and wheat commissions to serve North Dakota producers and enhance the competitiveness of these vital crops.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions.