

**Testimony of Senator Greg Kessel**  
**District 39**  
**In Favor of SB 2161**  
**Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee**  
**January 16, 2025**

Chairman Luick, members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee; for the record I am Senator Greg Kessel. I am a family farmer from Belfield, North Dakota and I also represent District 39 in the North Dakota Senate.

As a strong advocate for the agricultural community, I am proud to support **Senate Bill No. 2161**, which seeks to make meaningful enhancements to the representation and funding mechanisms for the North Dakota Barley Council and Wheat Commission. This bill addresses critical needs in governance and resource allocation, ensuring that the interests of our state's barley and wheat producers are protected and advanced.

**Key Highlights of Senate Bill No. 2161**

**1. Strengthening Representation for Producers**

- SB 2161 introduces a practical solution to challenges in electing district representatives by allowing for the appointment of at-large representatives when necessary. This ensures all producers, regardless of district participation levels, have a voice on the council and commission, promoting fairness and inclusivity across the state.

**2. Increased Funding to Support Industry Growth**

- The proposed adjustment in assessment rates—from 20 to 30 mills per bushel for barley and 15 to 20 mills per bushel for wheat—is a necessary step to provide additional funding for the council and commission. These funds will be invested in key initiatives, including:
  - Research and development to improve crop yields and sustainability.
  - Marketing efforts to enhance the competitiveness of North Dakota's barley and wheat in global markets.
  - Educational programs to support producers with the latest innovations and market trends.

**3. Ensuring Stability and Long-Term Leadership**

- By establishing clear procedures for filling vacancies and limiting terms to encourage new participation, SB 2161 ensures continuity while fostering fresh perspectives in leadership. This balance is critical to adapt to the evolving agricultural landscape.

**Why This Matters**

North Dakota's barley and wheat producers are the backbone of our state's agricultural economy. SB 2161 is a proactive measure that not only ensures effective representation but also secures the financial resources necessary for the continued success and competitiveness of these vital industries. It reflects our commitment to fostering innovation, expanding market opportunities, and supporting the hardworking producers who sustain our communities and economy.

I encourage my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly to join me in supporting Senate Bill No. 2161 for the benefit of North Dakota's agricultural future.