

Testimony SB2202

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Testimony in Support for SB2202

To the Honorable Chairman and the members of the committee, we submit these remarks on behalf of DRC.

Mr Chairman,

We are glad to have a version of this bill finally in the Senate seeing that that it has never been submitted outside of the house before. We hope that

We would like to offer testimony in support of of SB2202 for the following reasons:

- 1. This bill gives more people a fair chance to participate in the North Dakota Beef Commission.** HB2202 will end a system where independent cattle producers have to join memberships of an organization to be considered for the beef board. As it stands now the people that may be needed to advocate change in the cattle and beef industry are the ones who will be looked over in favor of those that support the status quo. If HB1207 were to be passed it would be the producers who could, with their votes, determine if they are satisfied with the status quo or opt for a change in leadership.
- 2. This bill clearly defines an eligible voter.** Previous criticisms of the bill have often stated that there is no way to define a voter. Now it sets that limit at an 18 year old beef producer actively engaged means that the individual has an ownership interest in a cattle operation, is engaged in an activity of sufficient scope and significance as to constitute a distinct activity; and has direct control of the cattle operation for the preceding year.
- 3. This bill does not immediately kick off existing members.** This bill will let people serving currently finish their terms until their time served has ended.
- 4. This is how all the other commodity checkoff programs conduct business.** Corn, Soybean, Wheat, and Barley board positions are elected, so why can't beef.
- 5. The Extension Office will conduct the vote.** This also spells out how the election will take place and still allow the governor and other government officials to have flexibility to nominate officials if needed.

There have been several criticisms of this bill that need to be addressed:

- 1. This bill takes away public livestock market representatives, and dairy producers as board members.** In our opinion, requiring a dairy producer when we have 26 dairies left in the state and thousands of ranches seems that they are given a disproportionate amount of power in this system. Market Representatives are also still allowed to run but ultimately running the beef commission is about ideas rather than if you check a random box. Many people would easily
- 2. There is no database of beef producers and it costs money.** Other organizations have made databases and kept records of who is eligible to vote. Soy Wheat and Corn all can do this. The beef commission is not broke, and 20-30 thousand dollars for a fair election seems reasonable to our organization after we've seen everything else it spends money on.

Ultimately Organizations that are opposing this want the status quo because they benefit from it. This bill would give us a better opportunity for all cattle ranchers to benefit from the systems and start making the markets work for them.

This is common sense legislation. We recommend a DO PASS.