

**Testimony on SB2202 – Addition of a Commodity Election for the North Dakota Beef Commission**

January 23, 2025

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB2202, which proposes the addition of a commodity election for the North Dakota Beef Commission and includes NDSU Extension in some of the responsibilities. As NDSU Extension is currently tasked with conducting elections for county representatives to serve on several commodity councils and commissions in North Dakota, we offer the following background and items for consideration with this written testimony.

NDSU Extension is responsible for coordinating or assisting with elections for county representatives to serve on six commodity councils and commissions: the North Dakota Barley Council, the North Dakota Corn Council, the North Dakota Dry Pea and Lentil Council, the North Dakota Oilseed Council, the North Dakota Soybean Council, and the North Dakota Wheat Commission. These elections help ensure that each commodity group has elected representatives who reflect the interests and needs of producers across the state.

Elections for county representatives are coordinated by NDSU Extension's County Agricultural and Natural Resources (ANR) agents and are generally held in person during county events or educational programs. These elections for county representatives involve nominations followed by voting and counting of ballots. District elections are then often conducted electronically via Zoom to improve accessibility and reduce travel costs.

The election process for these councils typically begins in November and December, with county elections held in January and February, then followed by district elections in March. The process includes associated costs such as advertising, printing, and postage, with total annual expenditures dependent on the number of producers and the commodity involved.

In review of SB2202, and based on NDSU Extension's experiences facilitating commodity elections, we note the following for consideration:

- **Notification Requirement:** SB2202 proposes that NDSU Extension notify all cattle industry representatives in the respective district and request nominations for district representative commission candidates no fewer than 45 days before the district representative commission election. Currently, NDSU Extension does not maintain a comprehensive mailing list for all cattle industry representatives.
- **Election Costs:** The election may incur costs, including printing, mailing, and advertising. These costs are generally borne by the respective commodity councils, and the total expenditure

would depend on the number of eligible cattle industry representatives in the Beef Commission election.

- **Timeline:** The process outlined in SB2202 suggests an election timeline of October 1 through November 15, which differs from the timelines used for other commodity elections facilitated by NDSU Extension.

In conclusion, NDSU Extension remains committed to ensuring fair and transparent elections for all commodity groups, including the North Dakota Beef Commission if they choose to engage in this process. Our primary purpose in providing this testimony is to outline some of the key considerations of the election process in the proposal set forth in SB2202.

Thank you for your time and consideration and please let me know if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,



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