

Testimony by Dr. Shelley Lenz in support of SB2246

Dear Senators;

I am a veterinarian, a business owner, and a landowner in the Dickinson/Killdeer area, focusing on strong rural towns. Food and energy come from our rural spaces, and often, the general public does not fully understand the contribution of our rangelands to our climate, food security, clean water, and competitive energy markets. Likewise, the industrial sector is actively participating in the carbon markets, and speculators in Western North Dakota are beginning to tie up carbon leases around the grasslands. Many ranchers are confused about carbon markets and whether these speculators are legitimate.

SB 2246 is a perfect opportunity to help educate our state lawmakers, fellow North Dakotans, ranchers, landowners, and federal elected officials about our rangeland's ability to contribute to food security, clean water, and a deep carbon sink like the Amazon forest.

In 2023, Senator Cramer sponsored "The Prove It Act" to provide reliable data needed to quantify the climate benefits of American products and Energy. During an in-person meeting with Senator Cramer in 2022, when asked whether the rangelands should be included in those markets, he said he needed data and publications to support the assertion that rangelands can be managed to enhance carbon capture. Luckily, one of our nation's top ecosystem biogeochemists, Dr Rebecca Phillips, worked on that issue in her carbon flux analysis in central North Dakota. Since that meeting, Senator Cramer's staff, the Governor's office, many local conservation groups, and ranchers have been attending and monitoring the Carbon Flux study being performed in Burleigh County with great interest and excitement.

Funding SB2246 will enable more data and excitement about the great resource our Grasslands provide not only for local conservation, great hunting grounds, clean water, and food production but also as an additional potential revenue source for landowners, ranchers, and climate advocacy in our Energy sector.

Respectfully,
Shelley J. Lenz, DVM, Ph.D.
Dickinson, ND