

Testimony SB2327

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Neutral Testimony for SB2327

To the Honorable Chairman and the members of the Committee. We submit these remarks on behalf of DRC.

Mr Chairman,

We understand the intentions of this bill but we believe that there could be some positive aspects of SB 2327 Overall, making sure that we have a consistent fund for the expansion of Value Added Agriculture is a positive step for the future of our farmers. We proudly support mills, pasta factories, creameries, meat processing facilities, and other businesses that directly add value to what we grow and raise in North Dakota, create opportunities for small businesses, and keep dollars in our local communities.

The biggest problem though is that these dollars can be claimed by anyone. A majority of these funds can potentially go to just a few entities and take away from investment opportunities for smaller operations. We see this in large animal agriculture facilities like Riverview Dairy, Multinational Corporations that can push out our local elevators like NDSP, or foreign entities like Fufeng in Grand Forks. More often than not our state is willing to throw cash at these entities when they do not need economic assistance.

We have to temper our desire to bring economic development to our state and balance it so that we do not become a state that is being exploited for our resources by companies mostly owned by out-of-state corporations.

If we are willing to make this a budget item every year we would respectfully ask you to consider this option. Why not instead of doing this, we use this money to build our own state owned facilities like the State Mill and Elevator. If we took a low interest loan or bond from our state bank, budgeted the money to build a state milk processing plant, meat processing plant, and a rendering facility. We could pay off the loans with a yearly budget that is clearly spelled out and the revenues that they produced from the profits could go into the general fund or pay off the project. Keep in mind that the State Mill has served us for 100 years and has turned a profit every year giving our producers a reliable place to sell their products. I think if we want to promote agriculture in our state we could do the same with our other industries.

North Dakota has a proud and long history of supporting family farms and limiting large-scale agriculture from out-of-state corporations.

