

Testimony SB2342

Sam Wagner
Ag and Food Field Organizer
Dakota Resource Council
1902 E Divide Ave
Bismarck ND 58501
Testimony in Opposition for SB2342

To the Senate Ag and Veterans Committee,

Mr Chairman,

We here at the Dakota Resource Council have supported state run value added agriculture facilities or to establish farmer owned Co Ops rather than trying to lure out of state or multinational corporations to set up our industries in North Dakota. And because of that we oppose this bill and will outline why in the next few paragraphs.

- 1. If a creamery or an organization is willing to break a promise to us in order to set up a dairy in our state then we shouldn't be rewarding them with state money.**

According to the information that we have gathered from various sources across the state including statements by senators, house representatives, and officials from the Farmers Union at their annual convention in December 2024, it seems apparent that the Riverview Dairy being proposed has been known by insider circles for close to 2-3 years before it was announced publicly. In that time it was promised to officials and the city of Wahpeton North Dakota that in exchange for building a creamery, they would support setting up dairy facilities in Abercrombie North Dakota, and Trail County. In the end, negotiations broke down, no creamery was announced but the dairies still remained. If the dairies are as profitable as they say they are and bring in business the investors should be able to do this without state money.

- 2. We already have a value added ag and ag infrastructure fund. If you intend to pass those bills let a milk processing facility apply to it like every other facility.**

The ND legislature is already considering SB2327 and HB1332 are already looking at giving grants related to these types of projects. We would respectfully ask the committee if this means that a dairy processing facility would be able to double dip and apply for all of the programs being offered or would this be the only program a dairy processing facility would be eligible for. If we already have bills for value added industries we should not have a special bill for this one type of industry.

- 3. If we want to truly promote value added services in this state they should be state owned like the State Mill.**

Instead of throwing money to private entities and setting up businesses based on luring out of state entities, I think we should take a serious look at the money budgeted and set up state run facilities similar to the State Mill. The North Dakota State mill has been profitable every year in its 100 year existence and has brought valuable revenue to our state while always having a consistent market to our farmers. There should be no reason that a well run facility for meat packing, dairy processing, or rendering carcasses shouldn't be profitable in our state.

Thank you for your consideration and we urge a DO NOT PASS