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**Testimony
of
Ryan
Gregg
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
Senate Agriculture & Veteran
Affairs Committee
February 6, 2025**

Chairman Luick and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2390. My name is Ryan Gregg, and I am testifying on behalf of the members of the North Dakota Farmers Union (NDFU). NDFU supports SB 2390.

At our most recent annual convention, our members adopted a list of priorities for this legislative session, which includes investments in childcare, rural food access, affordable housing, and rural economic development. Our members recognize that the future of agriculture is closely tied to the overall quality of life in rural communities. We believe strongly support investments in rural North Dakota.

SB 2390 establishes a rural catalyst committee and creates a rural catalyst fund to assist rural communities. The Department of Commerce would use this fund to provide grants of up to \$5 million to communities with populations of 8,500 or fewer. These grants would address needs related to art and culture, community and economic development, education, or health and wellness.

We appreciate the committee's ongoing discussions about how to best support our rural communities. We do not have strong opinions on the best format or vehicle for these important investments. We simply believe investing in rural areas is a critical step toward a stronger future for our state.

We respectfully request a "Do Pass" recommendation on SB 2390. I will be happy to answer any questions.