

Chairman Johnson, committee members my name is Gabe Thompson from Antler ND. I am here today testifying in opposition to HB 1487. I am honored to be a part of our representative form of govt choosing to be involved and represent my views regarding this bill here today.

As most of the slate of legislative sponsors of this bill have little or no experience or involvement in the cattle industry, my guess is they have been persuaded to lend their names to this bill thru a sense of conservatism resulting from phrases like "taxation without representation".

As a lifelong rancher who has invested in our industry thru the Beef Check Off almost since its inception and someone who was privileged to be elected to represent area cattle producers on the board of directors of the NDSA and then nominated and appointed to represent our states cattle producers on the NDBC, I can assure you any portrayal of the Beef Check Off being without representation is a disingenuous one.

Every rancher in the state has the opportunity to join the various orgs that nominate people to the NDBC. Every rancher in the state has the ability to volunteer their own name thru these orgs to be considered and appointed to the NDBC. Every rancher in the state has the ability to share their support or opposition to the appointments to the governor's office. Every rancher in the state can speak directly with the producer members of the NDBC board that are their friends and neighbors as to how funds are invested. And finally, every rancher in this state can bring good ideas to the NDBC board and present the facts and data behind them to be considered for funding.

The State portion of the Beef Check Off funds is 100% controlled by the NDBC. EVERY rancher in this state has the ability to have input into how it is invested.

We are represented if we CHOOSE to be.

With the new administration and people, we have now seen put in place, the ability to properly fund research and data and the science that will be our defense against agenda driven regulation is more important than ever. With the placing of extreme vegan climate change activists like Sen Booker on the Senate Ag Commission, bills targeting feedlots and ranching practices will be given a pathway to passage. And something as simple as a dollar per head investment can play a huge role combating that as we have seen. A few years back The United Nations targeted the livestock industry for their accused role in climate change under the report Livestock's Long Shadow claiming livestock contributed more greenhouse gas emissions than all the combustible engines in the world.

One researcher, Dr Frank Millowner, armed with actual real science funded in part with the Beef Check Off dollars used that research and data to PROVE the UN report was flawed and FORCED them to admit it had been manipulated and the result was the retraction of the report. Stop and think about that for a moment. A portion of one dollar paid by a rancher from Antler ND and others across the state of ND combined with others across the nation played a role in forcing a global entity like the United Nations to retract false claims that were targeted at our industry and our producers here in our state.

Now more than ever we will see the need for ALL of us to stand up and invest in our industry.

The state portion of the Beef Check Off has a refund option that is simple and easy.....about 10% of producers here in the state choose that option....to change the statute that 90% of producers support to a voluntary program that would require a change in the process of collection across multiple states where

ND cattle are sold to satisfy a small portion of our states producers who already have the option to get back their funds if they choose, is the wrong path to take.

In closing I am reminded of the parable of the little red hen. No one volunteered to help her plant her wheat. No one volunteered to help her harvest her wheat. No one volunteered to help her grind her wheat into flour.....but they all wanted a part of the end result

I would encourage a no vote on this bill to make the Check Off voluntary.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak here today and would answer any questions you might have.