



North Dakota Grain Growers Association Testimony in Opposition to HB 1487 House Agriculture Committee February 5, 2021

Chairman Johnson, members of the House Agriculture Committee, for the record my name is Dan Wogsland, Executive Director of the North Dakota Grain Growers Association (NDGGA). NDGGA, through our contracts with the North Dakota Wheat Commission and the North Dakota Barley Council, engage in domestic policy issues on the state and federal level on behalf of North Dakota wheat and barley farmers. I am providing testimony for you today on behalf of NDGGA in opposition to HB 1487.

For decades North Dakota commodity checkoffs have operated effectively and efficiently to promote North Dakota agricultural products to the U.S. and to the world. Additionally, they have contributed to the research and development of North Dakota commodities; for example, it is reported that for the 2019-2021 biennium North Dakota commodity groups contributed over \$11 million in ag research. HB 1487 seeks to gut that very important contribution to our state's number one industry and to negatively impact every producer in North Dakota.

Chairman Johnson, members of the House Agriculture Committee, HB 1487 is an unnecessary, unwarranted piece of legislation that will undermine not only the efforts of the North Dakota Beef Commission but could potentially undermine every commodity group effort in this state. That to the North Dakota Grain Growers Association is unacceptable.

Commodity groups, for the most part, enjoy a 90+ percentage support from farmers and ranchers; all of us would feel very good about a 90 percent approval rating. For those who do not support commodity group efforts there are provisions for non-supporters to refund their contributions. In very few assessments in this state and others is that possible. Additionally, refunders still benefit from commodity group promotion and research efforts despite refusing to help with the cost.

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HB 1487 would complicate the checkoff collection process, would make commodity organization budgeting impossible and would potentially turn commodity group efforts into self-promotion for survival instead of a focus of product promotion and research. That would negatively impact every producer as well as the economy of North Dakota.

Chairman Johnson, members of the House Agriculture Committee, it is very unfortunate that the concept contained in HB 1487 has once again come before this Committee and this Assembly. Virtually nowhere else in state government, except in the commodity checkoff world, can you disagree with how an assessment is spent, refund your specific contribution, and yet reap the benefits of the hard work put in by the specific entity.

Therefore the North Dakota Grain Growers Association would respectfully request that the House Agriculture Committee give HB 1487 a Do Not Pass recommendation and would urge the full House concur.