



Testimony of Brenda Elmer

Executive Director, North Dakota Corn Growers Association

House Appropriations Committee

November 8, 2021

Chairman Delzer and members of the House Appropriations Committee,

The North Dakota Corn Growers Association (NDCGA) asks for your support of House Bill 1505. This bill appropriates \$317 million of state fiscal recovery funds to the Department of Transportation for state and road bridge projects, county bridge projects, and transportation funding distributions to townships.

NDCGA is grateful for the township road funding provided during the 2021 legislative session. However, additional county and township road investment is needed. According to the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, infrastructure needs for all county and township roads in North Dakota is \$9.3 billion over the next 20 years.

At the same time, township property tax mill levies are capped, and rural infrastructure is deteriorating. Poor rural road conditions impact:

- Farm and ranch access, reducing efficiency and productivity.
- Rural school districts, which encounter delays and extra miles.
- Public safety, with challenges for emergency medical and fire response.

North Dakota's economy starts on local roads. Agriculture producers utilize more than 70,000 miles of dirt/county/township roads in North Dakota for a majority of their business, making this funding essential now to the economy of North Dakota.

With inflation costs for construction continually rising, and daily wear and tear taking a toll, these projects will only increase in cost over time. Unpaved road funding needs comprise approximately 66% of the total. If averaged over the next 20 years, the annualized infrastructure need is equivalent to \$466 million per year.

On behalf of the more than 13,000 corn growers across the state, we ask for your favorable consideration of HB 1505 to support county and township road investments and improvements.

4852 Rocking Horse Circle S. ° Fargo, ND 58104

Phone: 701.566.9322 web: www.ndcorn.org