

Some of the great things about living in rural North Dakota include clean air, freedom, and the opportunity for small farmers and ranchers to prosper among other North Dakotans. HB 1371 opens the door to big agriculture and competition with local farmers and ranchers by out-of-state and foreign corporations. The clean, rural lifestyle myself and others enjoy in Emmons and other rural counties would become targets of large-scale confined animal feeding operations by investors outside of North Dakota. With these operations comes the stench that hangs in the air. Have you ever driven down rural highways in the Midwest and found yourself overcome with a terrible smell for miles on end? Do you think that ND needs Big Ag? I live in a small farming and ranching community—and not one of us believes that bringing in Big Ag would be good for our rural communities. Not one.

I have seen the impact of Big Ag moving into a state to set up hog farms while I was earning my degree in North Carolina. Rural communities east of the capital were rapidly turned from traditional agriculture to hog farms—many housing 10,000 animals in a facility. After allowing corporate farming through the legislature, there was a 'rush' by companies like Smithfield to submit thousands of permits to the state. The smell of hog farms hung over eastern NC for years from sewage ponds. Then, a flood occurred in this area, drowning thousands of hogs, contaminating the ground water, and ruining small homes with sewage. When legislatures tightened permitting requirements, these companies left NC and moved their operations to another state that had opened their doors to corporate ag.

I ask you to consider how many ND rural residents really want this bill. How many of us benefit? How many of us want our clean air polluted by outside operators? How many of us want Big Ag to buy up our land and push out the small farmer and rancher?