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**Testimony of
Matt Perdue
North Dakota Farmers Union
Before the
House Appropriations Committee
February 8, 2023**

Chairman Vigesaa and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1276. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union.

NDFU supports HB 1276, which would provide \$50 million in new funding for the Agricultural Diversification and Development (ADD) fund. This program, which was established during the 2021 legislation session, is one of North Dakota's unique tools for developing value-added agriculture in our state.

The ADD fund provides interest buydowns and grants to support new or expanding value-added projects of all types. The ADD fund has demonstrated its value to processing facilities in our state. We also believe it will serve as a key tool for incentivizing livestock development.

In its first 18 months of operation, the ADD fund has supported a variety of value-added projects. ADD fund recipients include meat processors, ethanol facilities, craft malting, pea flour processing and more. Each of these projects demonstrates the ADD funds stated purpose to:

1. Enhance profitability for farmers and ranchers;
2. Create jobs; and
3. Grow the state's economy.

NDFU has had the opportunity to work with a couple projects that have received support from the ADD fund. We can confidently say the program is a game changer for those projects and for North Dakota agriculture.

We respectfully request a "Do Pass" recommendation on HB 1276. I will stand for any questions.