Chairman Luick and Members of the Committee:

My name is Gregory A. Johnson from Bottineau, ND. My entire life has been devoted to Agriculture and its community in ways to improve the industry not only for North Dakota but also as a Nation.

Currently I help a local farming operation and work as a Federal Crop Insurance
Adjuster. As a Federal Crop Insurance Adjuster there are many road miles logged
every year.

This past summer I was traveling to an Insured's farm on a 2 lane well-traveled paved highway. I encountered a swarm of bees crossing back and forth on the highway from the hives placed outside the highway right of way. This swarm was like a black tunnel which came up quick and covered my windshield to the point of barely being able to see out of it. I would compare it to when we encounter a winter "white out" as far as visibility. I turned on the windshield washers and wipers which only made it worse. I came to a stop about a half mile from the point of encounter and cleaned off my windshield. On the return trip, I slowed up at the spot where there were still bee swarms crossing the highway. There were still bees hitting the windshield but the impact on visibility was not as severe. Two days later I made a return trip back to the Insured's farm only to encounter the

same issue. On the trip home the engine hot light came on a few miles further down the highway. I stopped to check things out. The radiator was covered with dead bees. I used a windshield brush to clear them off the best I could. As I continued home the engine was running hotter than normal. I had to clean the radiator out with a low impact steamer as it was full of honey from the impact of the bees hitting the radiator. Had these beehives been further away from the highway the bees would have dispersed more and this situation never happened. As a concerned citizen, I am in support of Senate Bill 2134 (SB 2134) as this incident led me to think of 3 important concerns:

- 1. Public Safety on our highways. I was fortunate as I believe I did not cross over the median and there was no oncoming traffic. Had this been the case there could have been a very serious if not fatal accident. We often hear the statement (There have been no fatalities at that intersection so there is nothing to fix). Committee Members, Honey Industry and those concerned, here is an opportunity to be proactive and find solution to avoid a serious incident.
- Protection for the Landowner, Farmer and/or both. Legality and Insurability.

3. Protect the Honey Industry. I applaud the Industry in North Dakota being number 1 in production. I want it to not only remain but grow and prosper.

For these reasons I support SB 2134. However, I believe Section 1 needs to be Amended. To me, the language reads as no road access at all. It also would appear to include the Apiaries. The intent of the placement of the hives needs to be revisited and spelled out more clearly as this is not the intent of the Bill.

Perhaps the language would read (legal counsel revising) One-quarter of mile which is 440 yards (4 ½ football field lengths) off Federal, State and County paved Highways. This is for the placement of beehives in the field. Apiaries are exempt unless they are placing active beehives at these facilities.

At this point the only expense to SB 2134 is legislative. Let's do the homework needed with necessary input from the Honey Industry to enable continued growth, provide the protection needed for the landowners and farmers along with providing public safety. One major incident can have a negative impact on the industry for many years.

For this I support and encourage the Committee to forward on a "Do Pass"

Amended SB 2134.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory A. Johnson

PO Box 26

Bottineau, ND 58318-0026

Phone (701) 240-5574