



North Dakota Grain Growers Association
Testimony in Favor of
SB 2161
March 6, 2025

Chair Beltz and fellow members of the House Agriculture Committee, My name is Sarah Hall Lovas and I currently serve as a director on the North Dakota Grain Growers Association. Today, I come in front of your committee representing the North Dakota Grain Growers Association in strong support of SB2161 and ask you to support this bill as well.

SB2161 makes three key modifications:

- 1) It refines the structure and election process of the North Dakota Barley Council to ensure continued leadership by active and qualified producers. In particular, these key provisions are beneficial to our industry:
 - a. Ensuring proper representation: The bill clarifies that council members must be active producers in the district they represent, strengthening direct representation for farmers at the decision-making level.
 - b. Flexibility in filling vacancies: If there are no eligible producers available in a specific district, the council can appoint a qualified producer from another district to ensure uninterrupted leadership and continuity in the council's efforts.
 - c. Term limits and leadership developments: by setting a three-term limit for elected members, while allowing temporary appointments, SB 2161 encourages new leadership while maintaining institutional knowledge.
- 2) It increases the barley checkoff assessment from 20 to 30 mills per bushel. This modest increase will provide critical funding for research, market development, and promotion efforts that benefit all barley growers in North Dakota.
- 3) Similarly, it raises the wheat checkoff from 15 to 20 mills per bushel. These additional resources will support vital programs for our wheat industry.

These assessment increases are the first in many years for both crops. They reflect the rising costs of conducting impactful research and market development work. The additional funding will allow our state's barley and wheat commissions to expand their efforts in developing new varieties, improving crop quality, exploring new markets, and promoting our products both domestically and internationally.

As farmers, we understand the importance of investing in the future of our industry. These checkoff programs have a proven track record of delivering value back to producers through their various initiatives. The proposed increases will ensure this important work can continue and expand to meet the evolving needs of our industry.

Therefore the North Dakota Grain Growers Association respectfully requests your support for Senate Bill 2161 as the bill is proposed. This legislation will strengthen the ability of our barley and wheat commissions to serve North Dakota producers and enhance the competitiveness of these vital crops.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Sarah Lovas
North Dakota Grain Growers Director
Agronomist
Hillsboro, ND