



SENATE BILL NO. 2174
HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
MIKE BELTZ, CHAIR
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2174
MARCH 7, 2025

Chairman Beltz and members of the House Agriculture Committee, I am Parrell Grossman, and it is my privilege to be the Legislative Director for the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association. I appear in support of Senate Bill 2174.

The Association advocates for 8,900 operations that raise soybeans in North Dakota. In 2024, those soybean farmers planted 6.6 million acres of soybeans, producing over 245 million bushels of soybeans.

This Committee is aware that, according to a 2024 North Dakota Agriculture Industry Economic Contribution Analysis conducted by the NDSU Department of Agriculture, the economic contribution to North Dakota is \$41.3 billion, including \$26 billion from direct output and \$15.3 billion from secondary output.

The Model Zoning Task Force was facilitated and led by Commissioner Goehring and his staff in the Department of Agriculture. The task force was comprised of representatives of the Department of Environmental Quality, counties and townships, planners and many different agricultural commodities groups. Each agency, entity, or organization brought significant expertise to the group and process. It consisted of many meetings over a 20-month period which included many discussions, diverse opinions, and research including other states’

setback distances laws, as well those states' use of odor footprint tools in determining and regulating setbacks for animal feeding operations, or "AFOs." These scientific odor footprint tools have significantly changed the hard and fast rules of setback distances that are nonscientific or otherwise may be arbitrary.

Setback rules are important for agricultural growth because AFOs are a market for many crops or value-added products, that are suitable for animal feed, including soybeans, corn, barley, wheat, and oats. Soybean meal is a high-quality protein feed ingredient for many animal species. Soy meal is cost-effective and readily available in North Dakota, ensuring a reliable supply chain for AFOs.

The original legislation, prior to amendment, was the product of the Model Zoning Task Force and contained various setback adjustments and the use of an odor footprint tool. The Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee, during the hearing process, determined the setback changes were not acceptable. However, the Committee agreed to the new provision for an odor footprint tool that would allow the use of that tool for flexibility purposes.

The use of the odor footprint tool will help align the setbacks with science-based policies. Studies based upon odor dispersion modeling support the use of an odor footprint tool, allowing both flexibility and maintaining a consistent baseline for all operations. The Association agrees with the amended legislation passed by the Senate, as contained in the First Engrossment.

The Association emphasizes the potential for enhancing the soybean market, and the market for other crops produced by our farmers, as well as the other economic benefits to the surrounding areas of AFOs. This legislation will fairly and effectively allow or facilitate the locations of existing or potential AFOs.

The Agriculture Department and Model Zoning Task Force invested significant expertise and thoughtful debate in this work-product and has

proposed this legislation. The Association appreciated the opportunity to participate and recommends this legislation as a favorable result.

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Agriculture Committee, the Association respectfully urges you, after thoughtful consideration and debate, to give Senate Bill 2174 a “Do Pass” recommendation.

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