

Testimony to North Dakota House Appropriations Committee: SB 2020  
North Dakota State University  
Williston Research Extension Center  
March 2025

Chairman Monson and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to address you today on behalf of the Williston Research Extension Center (WREC). For the record, I am Shana Forster, acting director of the WREC.

The WREC provides research and outreach on diverse agricultural systems and crops and soils and includes dryland and irrigated research. Given our geographic relationship to the expansive oil and gas climate in the Bakken region and Williston basin, we also address land reclamation. Thank you for the funding provided during the previous legislative session. We are grateful for the continued benefit of fully paid health insurance policies and generous compensation packages. The Williston Basin includes a high cost of living and expensive labor and materials costs due to scarce resources and competition from the oil and gas industries.

We are thankful for the \$1.7 million of state-appropriated funding provided for the WREC Irrigated Research Site during the last legislative session. The initial plans included a meeting center, heated shop and office space. The current facilities are not adequate or safe to complete research activities and provide a respite location for staff during breaks and lunch. Initial building bids for this facility were well over the \$1.7 million provided, even with an unfinished building consisting of minimal internal structure suggested.

We are requesting a carryover of the \$1.7 million dollars granted during the previous legislative session and are asking for legislative authority to use \$1.3 million of special or local funds to complete the needed building project.

Additionally, the WREC was provided \$475,000 from the previous legislative session to complete a machine storage shed. Similar to the Nesson Valley project, estimates were significantly higher than the dollar value granted. We are requesting a carryover of the \$475,000 provided during the last legislative session, which contains an exemption from architectural requirements, and the authorization to spend an additional \$325,000 in special funds to complete the project.

We ask that you please continue this request already approved by the Senate. Thank you for supporting the WREC. The success of our

programs depends on your ongoing investment in agricultural research and extension, which directly benefits North Dakota's farmers and ranchers. I appreciate your time and consideration.



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