

North Dakota Stockmen's Association
Testimony to the House Appropriations Committee on SB 2024
March 19, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Nelson and members of the House Appropriations' Human Resources Division. My name is Julie Ellingson and I represent the North Dakota Stockmen's Association, a 95-year-old beef cattle trade organization representing approximately 3,100 North Dakota cattle-ranching families.

We appear in support of SB 2024 and, specifically, the grant which supports the association's Environmental Services Program. The Environmental Services Program is a statewide program launched in 2001 that aids cattle producers minimize water quality impacts and comply with state and federal environmental regulations. The program helps producers identify and implement cost-effective solutions that enhance the environment and their potential for profitability.

Since its debut and with support of the now-Department of Environmental Quality and the North Dakota Legislature, the program has been very effective. Our Environmental Services director has been invited onto more than 700 beef cattle operations – at least one in each county – to conduct a free, confidential assessment of the animal feeding operation and to determine how it fits with state and federal regulations. From those on-site assessments, the director has also developed approximately 200 Stockmen's Stewardship Support Program and Environmental Quality Incentive Program contracts for cost-share assistance to help producers install appropriate animal waste handling systems and other

environmental best management practices and become permitted.

Even more impressive is how the program has helped reduce the amount of pollutants, such as suspended solids, nitrogen, phosphorus and fecal coli-form, from entering into waters of the state. Since 2001, it has helped permit more than 100,000 head of cattle and, more significantly, reduce nitrogen and phosphorus runoff by more than 80 percent on those operations.

The Stockmen's Association enjoys a strong working relationship with the DEQ. Because of our daily contact and close affiliation with the state's cattle producers, we are able to administer services and answer questions for folks who may not be inclined to contact a regulatory agency directly.

Cattle producers' livelihood and legacy depend on the way they care for their animals, the land they graze and the water they drink. Your support helps us enhance environmental stewardship in our state, which benefit this and future generations.

For these reasons, we ask for your favorable consideration of this program.