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**Testimony of
Lance Gaebe
North Dakota Farmers Union
Regarding Engrossed Senate Bill No. 2299
House Political Subdivisions Committee
March 21, 2025**

Chairman Longmuir and members of the House Political Subdivisions Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2299, as amended and passed by the Senate. My name is Lance Gaebe, and I represent North Dakota Farmers Union.

The North Dakota Farmers Union strongly supports rural water systems. We recognize their vital role in providing affordable, clean, and safe drinking water. Our members understand that a reliable rural water supply is essential for both a thriving agricultural sector and vital rural communities across our state.

Initially, we had concerns with the introduced version of SB 2299. The original bill created unique audit thresholds and election procedures for rural water districts. These provisions, intended to address a specific local situation, would have negatively impacted all water districts in the state.

Stakeholders worked with the bill sponsors and senators to revise the bill. As a result, SB 2299 now makes reasonable changes to the rural water statutes without placing an undue burden on systems that are diligently working to provide reliable, quality drinking water to communities, rural residences, and farms and ranches throughout North Dakota.

We understand that rural water boards judge that they can effectively operate under the provisions of SB 2299 as revised by the Senate. Therefore, the North Dakota Farmers Union no longer opposes this bill and expresses its support.

Thank you for your consideration.