

**2025 SENATE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SB 2368**

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee Fort Union Room, State Capitol

SB 2368  
2/13/2025

A bill relating to a grasslands grazing grant program.
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9:45 a.m. Chairman Luick opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Luick, Vice-Chair Myrdal, Senator Marcellais, Senator Weston, Senator Weber, Senator Lemm

### Discussion Topics:

- Century code addition
- Previously administered program
- Application process
- Dakota Prairie Grasslands
- Isolated areas and utilization
- Project funding
- Converted oil wells and water resources
- Managed grazing and fire control
- Public benefit
- Cost savings
- Livestock producers

9:45 a.m. Senator Greg Kessel, District 39, testified in favor and submitted testimony #37029.

9:46 a.m. Doug Goehring, ND Agriculture Commissioner, testified in favor and submitted testimony #37635.

9:53 a.m. Wes Obrigewitch, President, Medora Grazing Association, testified in favor and submitted testimony #36711.

9:59 a.m. John Hild, Vice President, Medora Grazing Association, testified in favor and submitted testimony #36669.

10:02 a.m. Keith Winter, McKenzie County Grazing, testified in favor.

10:04 a.m. Doug Goehring, ND Agriculture Commissioner, testified in favor.

10:05 a.m. Julie Ellingson, ND Stockmen's Association, testified in favor.

10:06 a.m. Brady Pelton, Vice President of the ND Petroleum Council, testified in favor.

10:07 a.m. Doug Goehring, ND Agriculture Commissioner, testified in favor.

10:10 a.m. Mark F. Bohrer, Assistant Director of the Oil and Gas division, testified in neutral and submitted testimony #37636.

10:19 a.m. Chairman Luick closed the hearing.

10:19 a.m. Vice-Chair Myrdal moved a Do Pass.

10:19 a.m. Senator Lemm seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Larry Luick	Y
Senator Janne Myrdal	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Richard Marcellais	Y
Senator Mark F. Weber	Y
Senator Kent Weston	Y

Motion passed 6-0-0.

Senator Myrdal will carry the bill.

**Additional written testimony:**

Samuel A. Wagner, Ag and Food Field Organizer of the Dakota Resource Council, submitted testimony #35936 in favor.

Clarence Sitter, Chief Operating Officer of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, submitted testimony #36716 in favor.

Dean Wyckoff, Billings County Sheriff, submitted testimony #36754 in favor.

Maxine Rasmussen, on behalf of the Little Missouri Grazing Association, submitted testimony #36869 and #36870 in favor.

Marcia Kessel, County Auditor, Billings County, submitted testimony #37503 in favor.

Brock Wahl, Chairman of the ND Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, submitted testimony #37539 in favor.

John Bradley, ND Wildlife Federation, submitted testimony #37560 in favor.

Edward F. O'Keefe, Chief Executive Officer, Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Foundation, submitted testimony #37628 in favor.

Allison Stearns, District Manager, Medora Grazing Association, submitted testimony #38323 in favor.

10:20 a.m. Chairman Luick closed the hearing.

*Audrey Oswald, Committee Clerk*

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**SB 2368 ([25.1347.02000](#))**

**Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Luick, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2368 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

Testimony SB2368

Sam Wagner  
Ag and Food Field Organizer  
Dakota Resource Council  
1902 E Divide Ave  
Bismarck ND 58501  
Testimony in Support for SB2368

To the Senate Ag and Veterans Committee,

Mr Chairman,

Dakota Resource Council has long supported Rangeland Management and this program would be a sensible way to allow ranchers to manage their property and cover expenses. We agree with the provisions that the Soil Conservation districts need to approve of these plans. Making sure that ranchers have access to these programs is essential because this will allow them to overcome any cost barriers that may be in their way. The funding mechanism is generous and there are many oversights to make sure that this is being used properly. This is good government spending.

We would also like to make this absolutely clear. We would receive no funds from this project, nor would we attempt to secure any funds in this project. In the past we have been accused of trying to divert funding from the state to our organization and that is simply not true. Our organization has passed resolutions in our annual meeting that we do not take state or federal dollars to avoid being in service to any political entity. We simply support programs that would make our grazing more efficient and our soils more healthy. Many of our members would benefit from this program by having access to training and grants for their operation.

Thank you for your Consideration and we urge a DO PASS

1-30-2025

My Name is John Hild I am from Medora North Dakota and a member of the Medora Grassing association here in support of Senate Bill 2368 that is included in the ag commissioners budget.

Grasslands Grassing Grant Program That would be afford to grassing association in the state of North Dakota for projects on the ground provide water development, infrastructure for grazing of cattle, wildlife, public use, and ad firefighting resources.

There are thousands of acers of public lands and state land from Watford City to Bowman and though out the state that are used by both Ranchers and recreational people.

You may ask why this program:

To keep the grasslands in good condition by building fences to help the rotation of cattle. Water development to graze areas that have not be utilize for years with the help of a new creation of conversion wells thanking abandon oil wells into water wells that would supply water and miles of pipelines though out the Grass lands.

You may ask:

For the distribution of Wildlife deer, elk, birds, to areas without fresh water.

You may ask why the public:

With water resources scattered around the grasslands in the form of wells and stock tanks, this gives them the public hikers, bikers, trail riders, hunters the ability to cool off, water their bird dogs, water their horses.

You may ask:

Most important to be able to supply water resources for fighting wild fires and rescue operations by using water from stock tanks that hold 1200 gal to 2000 gal to fill fire units, using trails for maintenance to these infrastructures for access in case of rescues operation.

The Medora Grazing Association was started back in the thirties, there was not a lot of assistance at that time for the ranching community. You had to do with what you had to keep food on your table and feed your livestock.

We relied on mother nature to grow the grass, fill the water holes for our livestock.

Times have changed and there are programs/ funding for other industries for them to produce products for the state as well as the country.

With this Bill and funding in the last year has given some light, with shared funding, ranchers are able to improve their places, as well as the state and federal allotments for the cattle, to utilize areas of grass where there has been no water source, by spreading out the water cows and wildlife graze areas not used, which in turn rejuvenates grasses.



Areas that need new fencing to hold the cow on that grass, this in turn will give them a better quality of livestock to sell.

The ability to put in a pipeline and tanks, fences will help the future generations as they build up their operations and cow herds.

One other thing to think about is that these new water sources will also be utilized by bikers, trail riders and hikers, a water source out in the back county around Medora would certainly get utilized by wildlife as well tourist visiting the area. Hunters would also utilize these water sources.

I have experienced many rescues on the Maada Hey trail over the years, many of these rescues were due to dehydration, with these water tanks available on public lands it will benefit these types of incidents from happening as often.

This water improvement project over the last year has provided a reliable water source to areas that desperately needed improvement. Getting this water to our grazing areas will improve the quality of livestock, the grasslands and help to improve the Forest Service's public lands for future generations. I have meet with several permittees and they feel this is a step forward improving their Ranches.

The Medora Grazing Association is in support of this ~~Senate~~ bill 2368 to move forward.

Thank you,

John Hild

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Hild".



**MEDORA GRAZING ASSOCIATION**  
**PO Box 108, Medora ND 58645**  
**TEL (701) 623-4336**  
**[mga@midstate.net](mailto:mga@midstate.net)**



**MEDORA GRAZING ASSOCIATION**  
**GRASSLANDS GRAZING GRANT PROGRAM**  
**SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL NO. 2368**

Cooperator: Medora Grazing Association, McKenzie County Grazing Association, Little Missouri Grazing Association, Sheyenne Valley Grazing Association, Horse Creek Grazing Association, and Cedar River Grazing Association.

Title: Senate House Bill No. 2368-Grasslands Grazing Grant Program

The Grasslands Grazing Grant (GGG) Program is proposed to be authorized as a funding program by the 69<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly through Senate Bill No. 2368. The purpose of the Grasslands Grazing Grant Program is to provide grants to organizations representing cooperative grazing associations in the state. The grant funds will be made available for infrastructure projects which were located on national grasslands within the state that included water development, Fencing, Conservation initiatives, professional services and supplies, and projects to enhance wildlife habitat, capture carbon, and increase the health of the grasslands.

The Medora Grazing Association lies within the Counties of Billings, Slope and Golden Valley, situated in the Badlands of Western North Dakota. The Medora Grazing Association is entered into an agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service for the permitted use of 125,332 head months of grazing each year on the Dakota Prairie Grasslands. The Association administers the livestock grazing program on the National Grasslands to extend sound practices of land management, exert a favorable influence for securing land conservation practices, and to promote development of grassland agriculture to demonstrate practical principles of land use for the areas in which it lies.

The Medora Grazing Association has in the past applied for, received, and completed forty-three (43) GGG program projects during the course of the funding cycle that was created by the authorization of the 67<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly through House Bill No. 1009. The Association is extremely thankful for that opportunity and the benefits it provided to the Dakota Prairie Grasslands. There is still an inherent need for more improvements in the Medora Grazing

Association lands. The Grasslands and the livelihoods that depend on them are stressed and a viable future for both ranching and the wildlife it supports on the Grasslands is still needed. The US Forest Service Dakota Prairie Grasslands represents a significant portion of the western grasslands of our state. The listed projects that the Medora Grazing Association has proposed will be a crucial part of the Association and its members to ensure and support the preservation of the National Grasslands and the many family ranches that have a legacy in these lands. The management practices that these projects within the Medora Grazing Association include prescribed grazing strategies, installation of range infrastructure, implementation of restoration activities designed to improve vegetative composition, riparian conditions, wildlife resources, and wooded draws across the National Grasslands. The projects will have a tremendous impact on improving the ability to better utilize the grazing of all of the Allotments and enhance the resources for the wildlife populations.

The Medora Grazing Association remains committed in our partnership with the US Forest Service to implement various grazing management tools on National Forest Service Lands within the Medora Ranger District. Along with the aid of the Grasslands Grazing Grant implementation the Association will be able to utilize the resources that have been made available through the NDIC Well Conversion Program that will help alleviate the need for water that supports grazing and the abundance of wildlife in the Grasslands. We will continue to work with the Forest Service and our members to assist with planning and implementation of these improvements. The Association will provide administrative assistance, including any required permit applications with county of State agencies, liaising with contractors, project invoicing and procurement of project materials.

The Medora Grazing Association is thankful for the time and dedication of the North Dakota Department of Agriculture staff, the Medora Ranger District, the Board of Directors, and the members of the Association. The Association looks forward to another opportunity to work with all involved to continue making these much-needed improvements to the National Grasslands.

Wes Obrigewitch

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wes Obrigewitch', written over a horizontal line.

President  
Medora Grazing Association





A 501 (c) (3) public non-profit organization

January 29, 2025

Support Letter  
Re: Senate Bill 2368

Chairman Wanzek and Members of the Government Operations Division of Senate Appropriations,

On behalf of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation (TRMF), I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 2368, which seeks to establish a grasslands grazing grant program in North Dakota. As an organization dedicated to preserving the natural beauty, history, and cultural heritage of Medora and the Badlands, we recognize the immense value this bill holds for the ranching community, conservation efforts, and sustainable land use practices.

Medora and the surrounding grasslands are deeply connected to North Dakota's ranching legacy, dating back to Theodore Roosevelt's time. The grazing grant program proposed in SB 2368 aligns with TRMF's values to foster responsible stewardship of the land while promoting the economic stability of rural communities. By supporting sustainable grazing practices, rangeland restoration, and conservation efforts, this bill will ensure that Medora's iconic landscapes remain productive and vibrant for generations to come.

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Medora, ND 58645

PO Box 198  
Medora, ND 58645

**Bismarck Office**  
701-223-4800  
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1611 E. Century Ave.  
Suite 100  
Bismarck, ND 58503

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Bismarck, ND 58502

**MEDORA.COM**  
1-800-MEDORA-1

The bill would provide critical financial assistance to ranchers and land managers, allowing them to enhance water accessibility, improve grazing rotations, and restore native grasslands. These initiatives would not only benefit cattle operations but also contribute to habitat preservation, soil health improvement, and wildfire mitigation—all of which contribute to those the experiences of the individuals that live, work and visit Medora.

Furthermore, Senate Bill 2368 presents an opportunity for collaboration between ranchers, conservation organizations, and educational institutions. TRMF welcomes the chance to work alongside local ranching groups, such as the Medora Grazing Association, to facilitate public education on sustainable land management and to incorporate responsible grazing practices into Western Heritage experiences that attract thousands of visitors annually.

**Medora**  
EXPLORE IT. ADORE IT.

By passing this bill, the North Dakota Legislature will make a meaningful investment in the future of our state's working lands, local economies, and natural ecosystems. We urge you and your colleagues to support SB 2368 and recognize its role in preserving the legacy of the American West.

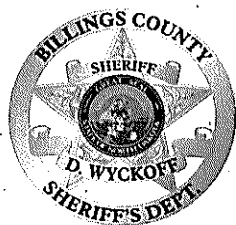
Thank you for your leadership and dedication to the prosperity of North Dakota's ranching and conservation communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clarence Sitter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Clarence" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Sitter".

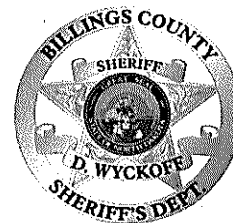
Clarence Sitter  
Chief Operating Officer  
Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation

**Medora**<sup>TM</sup>  
EXPLORE IT. ADORE IT.



## Billings County Sheriff's Office

DEAN WYCKOFF, SHERIFF  
495 4th Street • P.O. Box 157  
Medora, North Dakota 58645-0157  
Phone: 701-623-4323 • Fax: 701-623-4152



February 10, 2025

Honorable Senators Kessel, Patten & Honorable Representatives Kempenich, J. Olson,

My name is Dean Wyckoff, and I am the Sheriff of Billings County. I am writing this letter to you in support of SB 2368, relating to a grassland grazing grant program. As the Sheriff of Billings County, my primary responsibility is the safety and protection of the citizens who live and work here and those who are visitors to our county. The majority of our rural residents are engaged in ranching and farming. It is my understanding that SB 2368 would create and enact a new section of Chapter 4. 1-01 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to a Grasslands Grazing Grant Program. I believe these grants would help provide water development infrastructure for grazing cattle, wildlife, and public use and aid in firefighting resources if needed. I can attest first hand as to the need of emergency water sources while fighting wildland fires. Having readily available water when needed in an emergency situation can make the difference between a small and a large fire. Billings County is the first line of defense and is the primary responding agency for the initial attack of wildland fires within the Grasslands. The badlands topography where wildland fires often start is located in remote areas within the Grasslands with limited water sources. Having additional water sources available for emergencies would be very beneficial in aiding firefighting operations.

SB 2368 is a common-sense approach to improve cattle grazing, provide additional water sources for wildlife and recreationalists as well as aiding in firefighting operations. Please support this bill as it will benefit Billings County as well as its residents and the visiting public. If you have any questions, I can be reached at (701) 623-4323.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Wyckoff", is written over a large, stylized, handwritten "20" or similar mark.

Dean H. Wyckoff  
Billings County Sheriff  
North Dakota



## Little Missouri Grazing Association

201 Inman Street  
Amidon, ND 58620

[lmga201@hotmail.com](mailto:lmga201@hotmail.com)

701-523-6471

### **Little Missouri Grazing Association Grasslands Grazing Grant Program** **Support for Senate Bill No: 2368**

Title: Senate Bill No. 2368 – Grasslands Grazing Grant Program

Senate Bill No. 2368, if authorized by the 69th Legislative Assembly, would provide grants to the ND Grazing Associations through the Grasslands Grazing Grant (GGG) Program. The grant funds would build infrastructure on National Grasslands for water development, fencing, conservation initiatives, professional services, and supplies. These practices will enhance wildlife habitat, carbon capture, and grasslands health.

The Little Missouri Grazing Association (LMGA) lies within Slope County and part of Golden Valley County. Much of the federal land was farmland purchased by the United States in 1939 and seeded to crested wheatgrass. Many of these tracts are 320 acres or 160 acres and are surrounded by private land.

With the GGG program, the Little Missouri Grazing Association identified ten (10) allotments or pastures that relied on creeks (riparian areas) for livestock water. Declining riparian area conditions have been a concern for ranchers, federal land managers, and environmental groups for decades. Land Use Practice funding from federal grazing fees was never enough to drill a well. The LMGA members provided wells on their private land to pipe water to federal land. The Forest Service required members to sign a Water Use Agreement that their wells would provide water to that allotment in perpetuity. Controversial and contentious decisions by federal agencies to take water rights from ranchers in the west concerned the LMGA and its members that they would lose their individual water rights.

The 2021 GGG funded 75% of the cost to drill wells on eleven allotments. Six creeks and their riparian areas have livestock grazing and loafing pressure reduced. Sixteen projects were funded with the 2021 GGG funding.

The LMGA is extremely grateful for that 2021 funding and the peace of mind that sixteen allotments met the 2002 Dakota Prairie Grasslands Land and Resource Management Plan's goal that *"Move at least 80 percent of riparian areas and woody draws toward self-perpetuating plant and water communities that have desired diversity and density of understory and overstory vegetation within site capability"*.

The Dakota Prairie Grasslands staff are updating the 2002 plan. The first proposed Plan (2001) called for a 35% reduction of AUMs. The ND Grazing Associations succeeded in eliminating the destocking Plan. Still, the LMGA is concerned that a new Land and Resource Management Plan would permanently reduce AUMs if the Plan's goals are not met. Riparian areas are a successful target for environmental groups to sue federal agencies and force livestock removal from the National Forest and National Grasslands.

Through 2016-2019, the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies completed part the Northern Great Plains grasslands songbirds survey on two LMGA allotments. The US Fish & Wildlife Service identified

the Baird' sparrow and Sprague's pipit as species of concern and the Bird Conservancy provided a baseline survey to determine the birds' survival in their typical habitat. The results showed that the Baird's sparrow survival of monitored birds was 76% and that the Sprague's' pipit survival of monitored birds was 79% over the three years. While this study is a snapshot in time, the study indicates that the allotments provided the grasses necessary and the vegetation height necessary for these birds to survive. The 2021 GGG funding had a tremendous impact on better grazing utilization needed to maintain viable habitat for all the wildlife the Forest Service is charged with providing.

Additional GGG funding would allow the LMGA to implement more conservation practices across the grazing association. GGG funding expedites infrastructure in a way the Land Use Program cannot. The legacy between the family ranches and the National Grasslands has preserved these Grasslands, but the ranch livelihoods are stressed by increasing threats of radical "environmental" lawsuits.

The Little Missouri Grazing Association is committed to partnering with the US Forest Service to implement various grazing management tools on the allotments. The LMGA will provide administrative assistance, such as obtaining required permits, procuring contractors, buying project materials, and invoicing projects.

The Little Missouri Grazing Association is grateful for the time and dedication of the North Dakota Department of Agriculture staff and the Medora Ranger District for working with the LMGA Board of Directors to improve and sustain the LMGA allotments.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Nick Brown  
President  
Little Missouri Grazing Association



Project #	Allotment #	Wells	Solar pumps	Storage tanks	Pipeline (ft)	Tanks	Fence (ft)	Actual Project Cost	Estimated Project Cost	NDDA Reimburse	Member cost share	Stream improved with practices	Watershed & riparian acres treated
G-49	10	1	1	0	1,560	2	0	\$ 39,748.88	\$ 59,874.00	\$ 29,811.66	\$ 9,937.22	Horse Creek	640
G-50	26	1	2	0	0	1	0	\$ 33,581.92	\$ 35,400.00	\$ 25,186.44	\$ 8,395.38		
G-51	42	1	0	0	1,100	1	0	\$ 61,500.73	\$ 56,557.00	\$ 42,417.75	\$ 15,375.18	Little Missouri River	640
G-52	50	1	0	0	0	1	0	\$ 31,840.20	\$ 65,163.00	\$ 23,880.16	\$ 7,960.05	Bull Run Creek	1280
G-53	51	1	1	1	0	1	6,600	\$ 46,094.00	\$ 44,742.00	\$ 33,556.50	\$ 11,523.50	Sand Creek	1280
G-54	59	1	1	0	0	2	0	\$ 31,939.49	\$ 32,990.00	\$ 23,954.62	\$ 7,984.87	Adobe Wall Creek	525
G-55	100	1	1	0	0	1	0	\$ 17,837.70	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 13,377.96	\$ 4,459.43	S. Mosquito Creek	640
G-56	118	1	0	0	1,800	0	0	\$ 30,423.33	\$ 47,710.00	\$ 22,817.50	\$ 7,605.83		
G-57	BCA	Archaeology, botany, and wildlife surveys						\$ 20,875.00	\$ 11,800.00	\$ 8,850.00	\$ 5,218.75		
G-72	7	1	1	1	4,800	2	0	\$ 64,282.28	\$ 73,090.00	\$ 48,121.72	\$ 16,070.57	Bacon Creek	1280
G-73	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$ 13,514.16	\$ 10,560.00	\$ 7,920.00	\$ 3,378.54		
G-74	21	0	0	0	7,766	3	10,860	In progress	\$ 34,899.00	\$ 24,750.00	\$ 9,009.75	Philbrick Creek	1280
G-75	37	1	1	1	0	1	0	\$ 36,039.00	\$ 33,000.00				
G-76	105	1	0	0	550*	2*	0	\$ 113,876.69	\$ 83,000.00	\$ 62,250.00	\$ 28,469.17		
G-77	93	0	0	0	14,443	2	0	\$ 72,253.66	\$ 65,084.00	\$ 48,813.00	\$ 18,063.42		
G-228	67	1	0	0	0	0	0	\$ 113,430.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 67,500.00	\$ 28,357.50	Bull Run Creek	1440
Totals		12	8	3	31,469	17	17,460	\$ 691,198.04	\$ 773,869.00	\$ 415,707.31	\$ 181,809.16		9005

\* Other funding provided tanks and pipeline.

Horse Creek, Bull Run Creek, Sand Creek, S. Mosquito Creek, and Bacon Creek are tributaries to the Little Missouri River.  
 Adobe Wall Creek and Philbrick Creek are tributaries to the Cannonball River.



2493 4TH AVE WEST, ROOM C  
DICKINSON, ND 58601  
Phone: 701-225-3811

E-Mail: [bonnie.twogood@nd.nacdnet.net](mailto:bonnie.twogood@nd.nacdnet.net)

February 10, 2025

Dear Sir or Madem,

RE: Grasslands Grazing Grant Program

We are writing this letter in support of the "Grasslands Grazing Grant Program" for the Medora Grazing Association. The Stark and Billings Soil Conservation District strongly support the grant to enhance and improve the grazing lands.

This grant program will assist in developing projects to enhance and increase the health of the grasslands which will be a benefit to all parties involved.

The Stark and Billings Soil Conservation Districts concurs with the request to create and enact a new Section of Chapter 4.1-01 of the North Dakota Century Code relating to a Grasslands Grazing Grant Program.

Sincerely,

*Bonnie T. Twogood*

Bonnie T. Twogood  
District Manager

Cc: Medora Grazing Association



## BILLINGS COUNTY

P.O. Box 168

MEDORA, ND 58645-0168

**Billings County Commission**

*Steven Klym District 2*



**Phone (701) 623-4377**

*James Haag District 1*

**Fax (701) 623-4761**

*Dean Rodne District 3*

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee

February 13, 2025

By: Billings County Commission

RE: SB 2368 Grasslands Grazing Grant

On behalf of the Billings County Commission, I am writing to submit our support of SB 2368, the Grasslands Grazing Grant Program. The Billings County Commission has reviewed S.B. 2368, creating a new section of Chapter 4-1-01 of the Century Code. The proposed action concerns a grant program regarding grassland grazing to be administered by the Commissioner of the North Dakota Department of Agriculture.

This proposed bill is entirely consistent with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan as adopted by Billings County which prioritizes agricultural production as well as priorities of mineral production and tourism.

The Billings County Commission agrees with and adopts the rationale of the Medora Grazing Association in its letter of support for Senate Bill 2368 and urges a favorable vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dean Rodne".

Dean Rodne

Billings County Commission Chair



**BACKCOUNTRY  
HUNTERS & ANGLERS  
NORTH DAKOTA**

**TESTIMONY OF BROCK WAHL  
NORTH DAKOTA BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS  
SENATE BILL 2368  
SENATE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
February 12, 2025**

Chairman Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

The North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers supports Senate Bill 2368 and urges a Do Pass recommendation from the committee.

As resident hunters in North Dakota, we consider ourselves extremely lucky to have both the Little Missouri and Sheyenne National Grasslands within our borders. We view these chunks of ground as crown jewels of North Dakota and are incredibly grateful for all they provide (see article attached).

But an important distinction we would like to highlight, and one we fully support, is that those National Grasslands are multiple-use. They are working lands and they represent livelihoods for many generational North Dakota ranchers. We also recognize that while we as hunters benefit immensely from these public lands, they do not come without challenges. And this bill will give resources to producers to help mitigate those challenges and implement sustainable grazing practices that are good their operations, good for the grasslands, and good for wildlife.

Trends in many western states are moving towards fewer ranchers and out of state landowners owning more acreage. We view the passage of this bill as an investment to keep our homegrown ranchers on the landscape and to support them and the National Grasslands landscapes they rely on.

We support North Dakota ranchers having resources available to them ensure they stay on North Dakota's landscape for generations to come and we urge a do pass.

Brock Wahl  
Chairman  
North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers  
[northdakota@backcountryhunters.org](mailto:northdakota@backcountryhunters.org)





# CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL GRASSLANDS

*Posted by Brock Wahl | June 16, 2020*



*Photo by Jack Pieper*

For us prairie dwellers who lack the large mountain ranges and vast expanses of the Rocky Mountain West, June 20th will be a day to celebrate. It marks the 60th birthday of our National Grasslands. The Grasslands' story is one that is truly American: ripe with exploitation and natural disaster, an ensuing rescue effort, and prosperous success. The National Grasslands and portions of nearby Bureau of Land Management lands were once overgrazed, overhunted and abused sub-marginal farmland before a lengthy, bipartisan rehabilitation effort brought them back to a diverse and healthy range ecosystem in public ownership, where they remain today.

Although managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Grasslands were not part of the originally established 150 NFS lands that President Roosevelt set aside back in the early 20th century. Their origins can be linked back to the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, where free public land was offered to anyone who would cultivate it, all in the name of wheat. Demand for wheat grew so rapidly after the start of World War I that an estimated 20 million-plus acres of native prairie were cultivated and put into wheat production between 1909 and 1931 – an impressive feat given the agricultural technology of the time.

Unfortunately, that 20 million acres of native prairie had held down the soil for thousands of years, and, unbeknownst to the sodbusters, their aggressive cultivation efforts would become part of a perfect storm that helped to usher in the infamous decade of Black Blizzards. Sub-par soils, poor farming practices, wind erosion, over-grazing, and the worst drought ever recorded on the Great Plains led to the exodus of nearly 2.5 million people who abandoned their small farms during the late 1920s and '30s. In fact, the misuse and over-cultivation of this prairie contributed to the greatest economic collapse our nation has ever experienced.



In response to this problem and the resulting economic hardship, a Land Utilization conference was held in 1931. One of the actions that came out of that conference was the creation of the National Resources Board. After three years of data collection and deliberation, the board recommended that the Federal Government purchase and develop the submarginal farmland to serve as a public resource to provide economic stability for remaining rural residents and launch reclamation efforts to stabilize the land itself. This effort was established as the Land Utilization Program, perhaps the most successful of the many experimental agencies that were spawned as a part of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.

So, it came to be that the present-day Grasslands were purchased back from homesteaders under the authorization of the National Industrial Act of 1933, the Emergency Relief Appropriations Act of 1935, and the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1937. Between 1933 and 1946, the Federal Government would spend \$47.5 million (\$4.40 per acre) on 11.3 million acres of land in 45 states. All land sales were voluntary, and 25,000 families elected to take the relief. More than 8,000 of them were in such desperate financial straits that they required federal assistance to relocate. All told, there were 250 Land Utilization Projects varying in size from less than a thousand acres to over a million acres.

Initially, the Resettlement Administration was given management authority over the Grasslands. However, in 1937 Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act gave then-Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace management authority over the purchased lands through the Soil Conservation Service. This was significant because Wallace's progressive vision for agriculture and public land management was already put into play by one of the most important pieces of public land regulation to ever be signed — the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934.

Just days before the Taylor Grazing Act was signed, Wallace, a keynote speaker for the annual meeting of the Wyoming Stock Growers Assoc. took the podium and bluntly said, "It is all right, to go ahead if you want to under your rugged individualism and overstock your ranges and eat off your good pastures, it is all right for you to hurt yourselves if you want to, but it is a shame to hurt the land the way you have been doing."

Henry Wallace's work as Secretary of Agriculture laid the foundation for the ranching practices that are used on the Forest Service and BLM Lands today. Regulation that has kept them relatively healthy and protected them from the severe exploitation they faced leading up to the Great Depression.

By 1953, 2.5 million acres of the Land Utilization Projects had been transferred to agencies like the National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service. The remaining 8.8 million acres were assigned to the Department of Agriculture Forest Service in 1954. Over the next few years another 3.3 million acres were sold or transferred, chiefly to agencies like the Bureau of Land Management, but with some large chunks granted to state agencies for state parks and recreation areas.

Then on June 20, 1960, Acting Secretary of Agriculture True D. Morse officially designated 22 of these projects, totaling 3.8 million acres, as "National Grasslands". Two years later, a new Secretary of Ag. Orville Freeman would add two more Texas projects, Boggy Creek and McClellan Creek, to the Grasslands. Over a decade later in 1976, the USFS reorganized and consolidated those 24 projects and assigned them the names that we are more familiar with today. The final addition would come in 1991, another lingering land utilization project, the Butte Valley Nat'l Grassland in northern California.





Today, the U.S. Forest Service administers 20 National Grasslands Units across 13 states. 17 of the units fall within the Great Plains, from my home turf, the Little Missouri Grasslands in the Badlands of North Dakota, to the Thunder Basin and Buffalo Gap units in Wyoming and South Dakota, to the Comanche canyonlands in southeast Colorado and the most southern, the Caddo and Lyndon B. Johnson units of North Texas, not far from Fort Worth. The outliers are Butte Valley and the Curlew Nat'l Grassland in southern Idaho.

These public lands are multiple-use, just as originally recommended by the National Resources Board in 1934. They are administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes under multiple-use and sustained-yield management. Retired from cultivation, they are now an American success story. The federal government took great effort to ensure that even though these lands were no longer privately owned, they could still contribute to local economies and communities. The Forest Service returns 25% of all federal revenue to the county in which the land resides. The lion's share of that revenue is through resource extraction like oil and gas. There are also P.I.L.T. payments, or payment in lieu of taxes, to compensate county governments for any tax revenue lost due to their tax-exempt ownership.

The National Grasslands won't demand your respect and attention like the mountains to the west. They have a contrastingly timid personality in comparison to some of those blunter western landscapes. Yet, they remain a unique pillar to our public lands inventory and to our American history. They should be treasured every bit as much as the 14er's of Colorado or the red rock canyons and desert lands of the southwest. The Grassland's flora and fauna are still strikingly diverse; For elk, bighorn sheep, mule deer, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, hundreds of species of birds and native grasses and wildflowers, the prairie they all call home has played an integral role in the ecological and economic tapestry of our country.

This June 20th, I'll be tipping a cold one back in salute to one of my favorite hunting spots in the world, the Little Missouri National Grasslands. I am grateful for such a place to exist in my home state and for the hunting opportunity it provides me. I ask that you don't forget or neglect these rangeland treasures. As history has already shown us, we would all be poorer for it.





TESTIMONY OF JOHN BRADLEY  
NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
SENATE BILL 2368  
SENATE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS  
February 13, 2025

Chairman Luick and Members of the Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee:

For the record, I am John Bradley, Executive Director of the North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF). On behalf of the North Dakota Wildlife Federation, we are writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 2368. As an organization dedicated to the conservation of wildlife, habitat, and access for North Dakota's hunters, anglers, and other outdoor users, we recognize the importance of this legislation in promoting conservation through land management and the importance of North Dakota's grasslands for ranching, wildlife, and hunting opportunity.

Senate Bill 2368 supports conservation, responsible land use, and regenerative grazing practices. A key component of this bill is the Grasslands Grazing Grant Program, which will provide funding to organizations representing cooperative grazing associations. This program will support essential infrastructure projects, including water development, fencing, conservation initiatives, and would still comply with federal permitting requirements. Additionally, it will enhance wildlife habitats, improve grassland health, and make the state more prepared for emergencies like wildfires.

By enacting Senate Bill 2368, North Dakota will reinforce its commitment to preserving its ranching and outdoor heritage, ensuring that hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation remain accessible for future generations. The integration of responsible grazing practices and conservation-focused initiatives will further protect critical habitats while maintaining the balance between agricultural and environmental interests.

We hope that the Department of Agriculture prioritizes this program and finds new funding opportunities to bring this program to life. We would not be supportive of the bill if it were to rob from an existing grant program that had similar goals.

We urge a favorable recommendation on Senate Bill 2368, as written, and ask that you continue advocating for policies that support North Dakota's ranching and outdoor heritages. Thank you for your time and commitment to the future of our state's ranching and hunting community.

Edward F. O'Keefe  
Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Foundation  
401 Main Street  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505

February 12, 2025

Dear Senators and Representatives of the North Dakota Legislature,

Our friends and partners at The Medora Grazing Association have asked for our support of Senate Bill No. 2368 to create and enact a new section of Chapter 4. 1-01 of the North Dakota Century Code, and we are heartily glad to provide it.

This bill will permit the North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner to administer a Grasslands Grazing Grant Program that will aid water development infrastructure for the grazing of cattle, wildlife, public use, and aide in firefighting, if needed. Ranchers, as you know well, are conservationists. Like the farmers of our great state, they live and work on the land and depend upon its health for their livelihood and our state's economy. We are proud to stand with The Medora Grazing Association in support of this bill and hope you will too will stand with them.

The pillar principles of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library are leadership, citizenship, and conservation. The foremost among those three is conservation because Theodore Roosevelt believed that the use and development of our land is this country's greatest asset. Supporting this bill, we believe, continues the great tradition of Theodore Roosevelt's vision of conservation: for and by the people who love and live on the land.

President Roosevelt famously said, "I never would have been president if it had not been for my experiences here in North Dakota." We quote that line often. But far less often do we hear what he said next: "I have lived with the ranchman; I have worked with him; I have worked with the man who works with his hands; I have worked with the man of small means, with the typical American; and I know just how he feels, because I have been in his place and I feel that way myself."

We hope you consider supporting SB 2368 for our ranchers, our fellow citizens, conservation, and for all those who will visit our great state to see the work we do together for and with our land.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ed F. O'Keefe". The signature is stylized, with the first letters of the first and last names being large and prominent.

Edward F. O'Keefe  
Chief Executive Officer  
Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library  
[www.trlibrary.com](http://www.trlibrary.com)  
[Get in the Arena](#)

COMMISSIONER  
DOUG GOEHRING



[ndda@nd.gov](mailto:ndda@nd.gov)  
[www.nd.gov/ndda](http://www.nd.gov/ndda)

**NORTH DAKOTA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
STATE CAPITOL  
600 E. BOULEVARD AVE. - DEPT. 602  
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0020

**Testimony of Doug Goehring**  
**Agriculture Commissioner**  
**Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs**  
**Fort Union**  
**February 13, 2025**

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Chairman Luick, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee, I am Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring and I'm here today in support of Senate Bill 2368.

The bill establishes a new section in chapter 4.1 of the North Dakota Century Code that specifies parameters for administering the Grassland Grazing Cost Share Program. My department has administered the program for the last two biennium. I believe the program has been beneficial and has helped improve the functioning and health of the grasslands.

Chairman Luick, and committee members, thank you for your time and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.



SB 2368

**SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** A new section to chapter 4.1-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

**Grasslands grazing grant program.**

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  - b. Eligible infrastructure projects include:
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    - (3) Conservation initiatives.
    - (4) Compliance with federal permitting requirements, including fees for professional services.
    - (5) Other projects to enhance wildlife habitat or capture carbon, or to increase the health of grasslands.
  - c. Program participants shall develop and implement a grazing land plan in compliance with local soil conservation district guidance, and the plan must be approved by the local soil conservation district.
3. To be eligible for a grant, an organization shall provide one dollar of matching funds from nonstate sources for every four dollars of grant funding. The agriculture commissioner shall establish additional guidelines for the program.

**TESTIMONY**

- NDAC 43-02-03-35 allows conversion of mineral wells to freshwater wells
- Use for individual domestic and livestock use does not need conditional water permit
- DMR, United States Forest Service (USFS), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are finalizing a memorandum of understanding to define process for grazing associations, USFS, BLM, and DMR to work cooperatively to identify and facilitate process of conversion of oil wells to freshwater wells
- DMR determines if oil well constructed in such a manner that allows conversion, must have surface casing set into Pierre Formation
- NDAC 43-02-03-35 requires DMR to hold a hearing

Mark F. Bohrer  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
OIL AND GAS DIVISION

Nathan D. Anderson  
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DEPT. OF MINERAL RESOURCES

Edward C. Murphy  
STATE GEOLOGIST  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



- DMR and BLM if applicable approve plugging procedures to properly plug the downhole portion of the well and detail the cutting and pulling of the longstring casing, setting of isolation plugs, and cleanup of the surface casing
- Wireline contractor logs the surface casing to aid in identification of where to perforate the Fox Hills Formation
- Water well driller familiar with local geology identifies where to perforate
- Have been perforating approximately 40 feet depending on thickness of Fox Hills Formation
- Water well driller performs 24 hour pump test to determine quantity of water present
- Pump is installed and either a pit less system with curb stop is installed for pipeline system or the well is set up to run to a tank
- Water tanks and hydrants can be installed to supply rural fire trucks
- Well site and access road is reclaimed with USFS approval or DMR approval on private or state surface that stills allows access to well site
- Cooperation with power provider to maintain power to site
- Release forms required if federal minerals
- Water well is an allotment range improvement project between the USFS and grazing association
- 11 wells converted in 2024 at approximately \$40,000 per well
- Plan to install 5 pumps in 2025 ranging in cost from \$25,000 to \$40,000 per well
- Static water levels observed between 200 feet and 400 feet
- Wells have been pumped between 10 to 12 gallons per minute
- Program is a win-win for landowners that get a water well after tolerating oil well activity
- Have had operators reach out to DMR when getting ready to plug an oil well after hearing about grant program established by ND Legislative Assembly during special session in SB 2345
- SB 2345 appropriated \$3,200,000 for program but we encountered such enthusiasm and cooperation from wireline contractors, water well drillers, and oil well operators that we only spent or will have spent approximately \$746,222 and turned the remainder back to OMB



P.O Box 490  
Beach, ND 58621  
(701)-872-4551 Ext.100

Email: [allison.stearns@nd.nacdnet.net](mailto:allison.stearns@nd.nacdnet.net)

February 19, 2025

Dear Madam or Sir

RE: Grasslands Grazing Grant Program

We are writing this letter in support of the "Grasslands Grazing Grant Program" for the Medora Grazing Association. The Golden Valley Soil Conservation District strongly supports the grant to enhance and improve the grazing lands.

This program will assist in developing projects to enhance and increase the health of the grasslands which will be a benefit to all parties involved.

The Golden Valley Soil Conservation District concurs with the request to create and enact a new Section of Chapter 4.1-01 of the North Dakota Century Code Relating to a Grasslands Grazing Grant Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allison Stearns".

Allison Stearns  
District Manager

Cc: Medora Grazing Association

**2025 HOUSE AGRICULTURE**

**SB 2368**



# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Agriculture Committee**  
Room JW327C, State Capitol

SB 2368  
3/13/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 4.1-01 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to a grasslands grazing grant program.

8:45 a.m. Chairman Beltz opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Beltz, Vice Chairman Hauck, Representatives Anderson, Dobervich, Henderson, Holle, Hoverson, Kiefert, Nehring, Olson, Rios, Schreiber-Beck, Tveit, Vollmer

## **Discussion Topics:**

- Stranded oilfield assets
- Federal and private lands
- U.S. Forest Service oversight
- Cost savings
- Conservation & wildlife benefits
- Aid in firefighting resources

8:45 a.m. Senator Greg Kessel, District 39, Belfield, ND, introduced the bill and submitted testimony #41266.

8:49 a.m. Doug Goehring, Agriculture Commissioner, ND Department of Agriculture, testified in favor and submitted testimony #41265.

9:04 a.m. Wes Obrigewitch, President, Medora Grazing Association, testified in favor.

9:09 a.m. Julie Ellingson, ND Stockmen's Association, testified in favor.

9:10 a.m. John Hild, Vice President, Medora Grazing Association, testified in favor.

9:13 a.m. Keith Winter, McKenzie County Grazing Association, testified in favor.

9:14 a.m. Brock Wahl, Chairman, North Dakota Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, testified in favor and submitted testimony #41151.

9:26 a.m. John Bradley, Executive Director, ND Wildlife Federation, testified in favor.

9:27 a.m. Ben Simons, Medora Grazing Association, testified in favor.

9:30 a.m. Randy Schultz, Sheyenne Valley Grazing Association (SVGA), testified in favor.

9:30 a.m. Cody VanderBusch, Reclamation Specialist, ND Department of Mineral Resources, testified in favor and submitted testimony #41126.

House Agriculture Committee

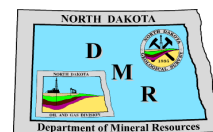
SB 2368

03/13/25

Page 2

9:40 a.m. Chairman Beltz closed the meeting.

*Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk*



March 13, 2025

Testimony Presented by: **Cody VanderBusch, Reclamation Specialist**  
Department of Mineral Resources

Presented to: **House Agriculture Committee**  
Representative Mike Beltz, Chair

## SENATE BILL 2368

Introduced by:

Senator Kessel and Patten  
Representatives Kempenich and J. Olson

**SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** A new section to chapter 4.1-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

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**TESTIMONY**

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- 23) SB 2345 appropriated \$3,200,000 for program but we encountered such enthusiasm and cooperation from wireline contractors, water well drillers, and oil well operators that we only spent or will have spent approximately \$746,222 and turned the remainder back to OMB



**BACKCOUNTRY  
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**  
NORTH DAKOTA

**TESTIMONY OF BROCK WAHL  
NORTH DAKOTA BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS  
SENATE BILL 2368  
HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
March 13, 2025**

Chairman Beltz and Members of the House Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

The North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers supports Senate Bill 2368 and urges a Do Pass recommendation from the committee.

As resident hunters in North Dakota, our Board of Directors and our members consider themselves extremely lucky to have both the Little Missouri and Sheyenne National Grasslands within our borders. We view these landscapes as crown jewels of North Dakota and we are incredibly grateful for all they provide (see article attached).

But an important distinction we would like to highlight, and one we fully support, is that those National Grasslands are multiple-use lands. They are working lands and they represent livelihoods for many generational North Dakota ranchers. We also recognize that while we as hunters benefit immensely from these large swaths of public lands, they do not come without challenges. With that in mind, we view this bill not just as a continuation of the GGG Program, but a sustained commitment to producers who graze the National Grasslands. Providing resources that will help grazers mitigate those challenges, improve or implement more sustainable grazing practices that are good for the Grasslands, good for wildlife, and good for the ranchers who graze the Grasslands.

Trends in many western states are moving towards fewer ranchers and out of state landowners owning more and more acreage. We don't want to see that, and view the passage of this bill as an investment in our homegrown ranchers, to keep them on North Dakota's landscape, to support them, their operations, and the National Grasslands they rely on.

We urge a do pass recommendation on Senate Bill 2368

Thank you

Brock Wahl  
Chairman  
North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers  
[northdakota@backcountryhunters.org](mailto:northdakota@backcountryhunters.org)





# CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF THE NATIONAL GRASSLANDS

*Posted by Brock Wahl | June 16, 2020*



*Photo by Jack Pieper*

For us prairie dwellers who lack the large mountain ranges and vast expanses of the Rocky Mountain West, June 20th will be a day to celebrate. It marks the 60th birthday of our National Grasslands. The Grasslands' story is one that is truly American: ripe with exploitation and natural disaster, an ensuing rescue effort, and prosperous success. The National Grasslands and portions of nearby Bureau of Land Management lands were once overgrazed, overhunted and abused sub-marginal farmland before a lengthy, bipartisan rehabilitation effort brought them back to a diverse and healthy range ecosystem in public ownership, where they remain today.

Although managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Grasslands were not part of the originally established 150 NFS lands that President Roosevelt set aside back in the early 20th century. Their origins can be linked back to the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, where free public land was offered to anyone who would cultivate it, all in the name of wheat. Demand for wheat grew so rapidly after the start of World War I that an estimated 20 million-plus acres of native prairie were cultivated and put into wheat production between 1909 and 1931 — an impressive feat given the agricultural technology of the time.

Unfortunately, that 20 million acres of native prairie had held down the soil for thousands of years, and, unbeknownst to the sodbusters, their aggressive cultivation efforts would become part of a perfect storm that helped to usher in the infamous decade of Black Blizzards. Sub-par soils, poor farming practices, wind erosion, over-grazing, and the worst drought ever recorded on the Great Plains led to the exodus of nearly 2.5 million people who abandoned their small farms during the late 1920s and '30s. In fact, the misuse and over-cultivation of this prairie contributed to the greatest economic collapse our nation has ever experienced.



In response to this problem and the resulting economic hardship, a Land Utilization conference was held in 1931. One of the actions that came out of that conference was the creation of the National Resources Board. After three years of data collection and deliberation, the board recommended that the Federal Government purchase and develop the submarginal farmland to serve as a public resource to provide economic stability for remaining rural residents and launch reclamation efforts to stabilize the land itself. This effort was established as the Land Utilization Program, perhaps the most successful of the many experimental agencies that were spawned as a part of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.

So, it came to be that the present-day Grasslands were purchased back from homesteaders under the authorization of the National Industrial Act of 1933, the Emergency Relief Appropriations Act of 1935, and the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1937. Between 1933 and 1946, the Federal Government would spend \$47.5 million (\$4.40 per acre) on 11.3 million acres of land in 45 states. All land sales were voluntary, and 25,000 families elected to take the relief. More than 8,000 of them were in such desperate financial straits that they required federal assistance to relocate. All told, there were 250 Land Utilization Projects varying in size from less than a thousand acres to over a million acres.

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Just days before the Taylor Grazing Act was signed, Wallace, a keynote speaker for the annual meeting of the Wyoming Stock Growers Assoc. took the podium and bluntly said, "It is all right, to go ahead if you want to under your rugged individualism and overstock your ranges and eat off your good pastures, it is all right for you to hurt yourselves if you want to, but it is a shame to hurt the land the way you have been doing."

Henry Wallace's work as Secretary of Agriculture laid the foundation for the ranching practices that are used on the Forest Service and BLM Lands today. Regulation that has kept them relatively healthy and protected them from the severe exploitation they faced leading up to the Great Depression.

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Today, the U.S. Forest Service administers 20 National Grasslands Units across 13 states. 17 of the units fall within the Great Plains, from my home turf, the Little Missouri Grasslands in the Badlands of North Dakota, to the Thunder Basin and Buffalo Gap units in Wyoming and South Dakota, to the Comanche canyonlands in southeast Colorado and the most southern, the Caddo and Lyndon B. Johnson units of North Texas, not far from Fort Worth. The outliers are Butte Valley and the Curlew Nat'l Grassland in southern Idaho.

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This June 20th, I'll be tipping a cold one back in salute to one of my favorite hunting spots in the world, the Little Missouri National Grasslands. I am grateful for such a place to exist in my home state and for the hunting opportunity it provides me. I ask that you don't forget or neglect these rangeland treasures. As history has already shown us, we would all be poorer for it.



COMMISSIONER  
DOUG GOEHRING



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**NORTH DAKOTA  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

STATE CAPITOL  
600 E. BOULEVARD AVE. - DEPT. 602  
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0020

**Testimony of Doug Goehring  
Agriculture Commissioner  
House Agriculture  
J-Wing 327C  
March 13, 2025**

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Chairman Beltz, and members of the House Agriculture Committee, I am Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring and I'm here today in support of Senate Bill 2368.

The bill establishes a new section in chapter 4.1 of the North Dakota Century Code that specifies parameters for administering the Grassland Grazing Cost Share Program. My department has administered the program for the last two biennium. I believe the program has been beneficial and has helped improve the functioning and health of the grasslands.

Chairman Beltz, and committee members, thank you for your time and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.



## Odermann Cattle Company

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March 12, 2025

TO: Senator Greg Kessel, District 39

RE: Senate Bill 2368

My letter today is to voice support of Senate Bill 2368, the Grasslands Grazing Grant Program. As a beef producer, forage management is perhaps the most vital part of any successful beef operation. The success of forage management hinges on the symbiotic relationship between the soil, air and water. All three are necessary to produce the feed for livestock.

Water is the ingredient most useful in management decisions to fully utilize forage, which is why the enactment of Senate Bill 2368 is such a game changer for beef production. The monies from the bill will allow for establishment of water wells, cross fencing and other conservation practices that protect and utilize resources and strengthen the revenue stream for those in beef production.

Wells will produce the water; pipelines can send the water to areas where the forage is lush and tanks can provide the fresh water reservoirs to maintain herd health and protect the environment. The farmers and ranchers of North Dakota are our frontline environmentalists who have a direct line to using tried and true conservation practices. SB 2368 will allow producers a funding mechanism through a grant program which will allow for pasture rotation, wildlife enhancement and carbon capture.

I strongly support the provisions of this piece of legislation. I urge support of SB 2368.

Sincerely,

James A. Odermann

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Agriculture Committee Room JW327C, State Capitol

SB 2368  
3/14/2025

A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 4.1-01 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to a grasslands grazing grant program.

8:23 a.m. Chairman Beltz opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Beltz, Vice Chairman Hauck, Representatives Anderson, Dobervich, Henderson, Holle, Hoverson, Kiefert, Nehring, Olson, Rios, Schreiber-Beck, Tveit, Vollmer

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

8:23 a.m. Representative Nehring moved Do Pass.

8:23 a.m. Representative Hoverson seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Mike Beltz	Y
Representative Dori Hauck	Y
Representative Karen A. Anderson	Y
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Y
Representative Donna Henderson	Y
Representative Dawson Holle	Y
Representative Jeff Hoverson	Y
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Y
Representative Dennis Nehring	Y
Representative SuAnn Olson	Y
Representative Nico Rios	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Bill Tveit	Y
Representative Daniel R. Vollmer	AB

Motion passed 13-0-1

8:24 a.m. Representative Nehring will carry the bill.

8:24 a.m. Chairman Beltz closed the meeting.

*Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk*



**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**SB 2368 ([25.1347.02000](#))**

**Agriculture Committee (Rep. Beltz, Chairman)** recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2368 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.