

Good afternoon Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee. My name is Greg Lardy and I currently serve as the Vice President of Agricultural Affairs and Dean of the College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources at North Dakota State University. We support HB 1431 and its' provision for funding the construction of the Agricultural Products Development Center and the Northern Crops Institute. NDSU Agriculture and the Northern Crops Institute (NCI) have worked collaboratively since NCI was created to benefit all of North Dakota agriculture. The construction of this facility would provide many benefits to the state's agricultural industry which I have outlined below.

- Growth of New and Existing Markets — Developing new and growing existing markets is critical to agricultural success. The facility will provide research and development to support this need, including expanded testing and developing new and better uses of these ingredients. Improvements in product quality open new markets and enhance existing markets.
- More Graduates Ready for the Workforce — The APDC will increase the number of students graduating from the grain, food, and meat science programs. This facility will ensure graduates are ready to fill the industry's need for graduates in these important fields and provide more opportunities for these students to enter the work force as employees or develop their own businesses in the future.
- Enhanced Value-Added Opportunities and Partnerships with Industry — The technical expertise of NDSU scientists and NCI professionals helps existing businesses grow, assists with development of value-added businesses and creates entrepreneurial opportunities. Further processing of our agricultural commodities provides economic opportunity and growth for rural areas, creates jobs, and grows and diversifies the tax base. A long-term outcome of this investment will be further enhancements in value-added agricultural processing businesses across the state.
- Improved Ability to Educate Foreign and Domestic Customers — North Dakota has long been known for excellent quality agricultural commodities. NCI's role in educating our customers will be expanded and enhanced. Foreign and domestic buyers will learn from experts about the quality of our products, how to best use them in their product lines, and how to manage purchases and logistics from regional suppliers. This translates into market access as well as enhanced revenues for North Dakota farmers and ranchers, and rural communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill and your consideration of funding this important component of infrastructure related to our state's agricultural and food processing industry.