



U.S. Durum Growers Association

PROMOTING THE PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF DURUM AND SEMOLINA

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Testimony of Steve Perdue

USDGA Director

In Support of HB 1431

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Committee:

My name is Steve Perdue, and I am a farmer from Ray and a director for the United States Durum Growers Association (USDGA). On behalf of USDGA, I am here in support of HB 1431, specifically as it relates to the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Agricultural Products Development Center, Northern Crops Institute (NCI) and rural transportation infrastructure. USDGA recognizes the importance of updated facilities and infrastructure, as well as state-of-the-art technology and equipment to ensuring the growth and strength of the state's number one industry – agriculture.

The current facilities at Harris Hall no longer provide the space or safety needed to carryout research that is vitally important to the producers in our state. The Agricultural Products Development Center will allow NDSU to continue to deliver research-based solutions needed to ensure North Dakota's farmers and ranchers are able to produce and market superior commodities to global customers.

North Dakota produces around 50-60 percent of the nation's durum, and NDSU's durum breeding program is essential as no significant other public or private breeding programs exist. It is essential that the appropriate facilities exist to continue this research. In addition, Harris Hall hosts annual foreign trade delegations to showcase the quality of the regions crops for worldwide food production. Harris Hall's designation as one of the top two buildings in the poorest condition at NDSU and does not provide for a positive "showcase" of North Dakota's high-quality commodities.

Your support of the Northern Crops Institute (NCI) is also encouraged. Its collaborative efforts to support the promotion and market development of crops grown in a four-state region is more important than ever. NCI's educational and technical programs are essential to not only

maintaining but expanding domestic and international markets for northern-grown crops, including durum.

We'd also want to reiterate the need for funding rural infrastructure, specifically to townships for rural roads and bridges. This funding is much needed as producers utilize the rural road systems to access fields and property. Many township roads and bridges across the state are unsafe for producers to carry the heavy loads and large equipment across them. We ask that you continue to support the inclusion of funds to mitigate the needs of rural infrastructure in townships.

Agriculture is and will continue to be the foundation of our state's economy, and these needs are essential to North Dakota agriculture. Therefore, we'd appreciate your support of the funding for the Ag Products Development Center, Northern Crops Institute and rural township roads and bridges within HB 1431.