

January 18, 2021

The Honorable Ray Holmberg
Chairman, Appropriations Committee
North Dakota Senate
North Dakota State Capitol
600 East Boulevard Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58505

Re: Information Relative to SB2020, a bill for an Act to provide an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the North Dakota State University Extension Service, Northern Crops Institute, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, Main Research Center, Branch Research Centers, and Agronomy Seed Farm; to provide for a report; and to provide an exemption.

Chairman Holmberg and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

As one of the American Soybean Association delegates for the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association and current chairman of the United States Soybean Export Council, I thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB2020.

As a soybean farmer near Valley City, North Dakota, my primary concern is the continuing attempt to cut base level support for the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute. Agriculture is one of the leading industries in North Dakota, with farm income around \$9 billion, yet the budgets to support growth are under attack. We ask that the hold-even budget be approved so that support is continued for vital programs designed to help build agriculture.

With 90 percent of the state's land dedicated to agriculture and one in four people working in agriculture, the importance of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute is critical. Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute provides us with critical knowledge of our supply chains, in that they can quantify the traffic patterns and routes that North Dakota agricultural products take directly from the farm gate. Engineers have the ability to understand and forecast the infrastructure needed to transport product effectively, efficiently and safely. Knowing the road miles in my township and the safety rating of our bridges helps my township and county boards prioritize maintenance and repairs so that we can get our crops to market.

In Barnes county, we have had several especially wet years. On my farm, that has been reflected in harvesting 2019 corn in the spring of 2020 and ending up with a lot of prevented plant acres. On my township roads, the effects are still evident today. There are probably more roads in desperate need of repair than there is money to make improvements, but because of the work at the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, we at least have data and information that can help us prioritize our decision making.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB2020. I hope my comments are of value in your decision-making. I stand ready to answer any questions that you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Monte Peterson
Board Member, North Dakota Soybean Growers Association
Board Member, American Soybean Association
Chairman, U.S. Soybean Export Council