

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 you may recall from my testimony on the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, I am one of the American Soybean Association delegates for the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association and the current chairman of the United States Soybean Export Council. Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB2020.

As a soybean farmer near Valley City, North Dakota, I will repeat that my primary concern is the continuing attempt to cut base level support for the Northern Crops Institute. As you may recall, 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.

Northern Crops Institute (NCI) started in 1979 as a collaborative effort among the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Montana to promote, develop, and market crops grown in this four-state region. NCI is now an international meeting and learning center that unites customers, commodity traders, technical experts, and professors for discussion and education. Since 1983, over 133 nations have sent participants to NCI who are government representatives, private industry agriculture workers, or from other commodity utilization industries.

When the NCI was created, wheat was the largest crop in the state. In 1983, there were more than 7 million acres of wheat and just over 500,000 acres of soybeans. In recent years, the planted acreage between these two crops have been similar and the NCI is one of the reasons for soybean growth. More than 90 percent of our soybeans are exported, with up to \$2 billion in value, and the training and trade servicing received by our international customers through NCI have been critical to that export growth.

If you'll indulge me, I'd like to tell a brief success story. I was on a trade mission to Karachi, Pakistan, where we were promoting U.S. Soy and visiting with customers in the oil seed sector. On the way to our hotel later in the day, we decided to visit a dairy farm that was located within the city. After we had toured his facility and we were drinking tea with the owner, he asked us to wait while he brought us something he thought we should see. He proudly returned with a

certificate that he had earned from the NCI where he had learned about the benefits of utilizing U.S. soy in his feed ration to produce better milk. He wanted to share with me the success he had obtained through his education by attending one of NCI's sponsored feeding and procurement courses.

I have had the opportunity to host trade teams to my farm and often hear firsthand of the needed trade servicing our customers desire that can benefit them in their own operations. Many customers appreciate the ability to understand processing and better analysis of feed rations and how understanding the procurement process can lead to better profit margins in their home land. NCI works hand in hand with organizations like the U.S. Soybean Export Council. With the support of NCI, we can better define quality and build a preference for the product we grow here to gain better market share around the world.

As you can see, the Northern Crops Institute helps the farmers of the great plains promote and market what we grow here. They help with trade servicing and the reach of the NCI is global. I share this, because it demonstrates the effectiveness of the work at NCI.

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