

Testimony by Duane DeKrey, General Manager
Garrison Diversion Conservancy District

to the

Senate Appropriations Committee

Bismarck, North Dakota
January 20, 2021

Chairman, members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 2020, related to the NDSU Extension Budget. My name is Duane DeKrey; I am the General Manager for the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District.

Garrison Diversion focuses on the development, expansion and enhancement of irrigation in North Dakota and together, through a cooperative agreement with the North Dakota State University, provides aid to the Oakes Irrigation Research Site. The 40-acre irrigation research site benefits both irrigators and dryland farmers throughout North Dakota.

The Oakes Irrigation Research Site was established as a 20-acre plot in 1970 and was expanded to 40 acres in 2015. The objectives of the Oakes Irrigation Research Site are to provide irrigators with information that results in efficient crop production, develop and refine best management practices, support irrigation development in North Dakota, and to determine alternate and specialty crops to be grown under irrigation in North Dakota.

For many years, Garrison Diversion has funded 75% of the NDSU OIRS operations, with the remaining 25% funded through grants. However, in 2020,

the Garrison Diversion Board of Directors voted to begin phasing out of annual funding for the site operations. The goal is to phase-out of OIRS funding by 2026/2027. We are requesting the legislature examine the potential to fund the OIRS from that point forward.

Many people will come before you this session and make the point that funding their priority will be good financial business for the state. The return on investment of NDSU Agriculture to the state of North Dakota is profound; the improved farming practices, quality of life and leadership training for youth and adults is unequaled by any other organization in the state.

We would appreciate any consideration you could give to the Oakes Irrigation Research Site. Thank you.