

2023 SENATE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

SB 2027

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee Fort Union Room, State Capitol

SB 2027
1/5/2023

Advisory committee on sustainable agriculture

1:30 PM Chairman Luick called the meeting to order.

Members Present: Chairman Luick, Vice Chairman Myrdal, Senator Lemm, Senator Weber, Senator Weston, Absent: Senator Hogan.

1:30 PM Agricultural Commissioner Doug Goehring testified in support of SB 2027. #12409

1:41 PM Dustin Richard, Legislative Council, spoke about the mechanics of the bill.

1:44 PM Senator Myrdal moved to Do Pass.
Second by Senator Lemm.

Roll call vote:

Senators	Vote
Senator Larry Luick	Y
Senator Janne Myrdal	Y
Senator Kathy Hogan	A
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Mark F. Weber	Y
Senator Kent Weston	Y

Vote: 5 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent

1:43 PM Senator Myrdal will carry the bill.

1:44 PM Chairman Luick adjourned the meeting

Brenda Cook, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2027: Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Luick, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (5 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2027 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

2023 HOUSE AGRICULTURE

SB 2027

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Agriculture Committee
Room JW327C, State Capitol

SB 2027
3/16/2023

Relating to the advisory committee on sustainable agriculture.

Chairman Thomas called the meeting to order 8:32 AM

Members present: Chairman Thomas, Vice Chairman Beltz, Representatives Christy, Finley-DeVile, Fisher, Headland, Henderson, Kiefert, Olson, Prichard, Schreiber-Beck, Tveit, VanWinkle.

Discussion Topics:

- Repeal

In Favor:

Senator Randy Lemm, District 20, Hillsboro, ND, (no written testimony)
Doug Goehring, Commissioner, ND Department of Agriculture, #25594

Chairman Thomas adjourned the meeting 8:36 AM

Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Agriculture Committee
Room JW327C, State Capitol

SB 2027
3/16/2023

Relating to the advisory committee on sustainable agriculture.

Chairman Thomas called the meeting to order 11:06 AM

Members present: Chairman Thomas, Vice Chairman Beltz, Representatives Christy, Finley-DeVille, Fisher, Headland, Henderson, Kiefert, Olson, Prichard, Schreiber-Beck, Tveit, VanWinkle.

Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

Representative Christy moved a do pass.
Representative Prichard seconded.

Roll call vote:

Representatives	Vote
Representative Paul J. Thomas	Y
Representative Mike Beltz	Y
Representative Josh Christy	Y
Representative Lisa Finley-DeVille	Y
Representative Jay Fisher	Y
Representative Craig Headland	AB
Representative Donna Henderson	Y
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Y
Representative SuAnn Olson	Y
Representative Brandon Prichard	Y
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Y
Representative Bill Tveit	Y
Representative Lori VanWinkle	AB

Motion passed 11-0-2

Representative Prichard will carry the bill.

Chairman Thomas adjourned the meeting 11:07 AM

Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2027: Agriculture Committee (Rep. Thomas, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (11 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2027 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.

TESTIMONY

SB 2027

COMMISSIONER
DOUG GOEHRING



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**Testimony of Doug Goehring, North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner
Senate Agriculture & Veterans Affairs Committee
Thursday, January 5, 2023, 1:30 p.m.
Fort Union Room, State Capitol
Senate Bill 2027**

Chairman Luick and members of the Agriculture and Veteran's Affairs Committee, I am Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring. I support Senate Bill 2027, repealing NDCC 4.1-01-11. The Advisory Committee on Sustainable Agriculture, as created by this law, is unnecessary.

Advisory Committee on Sustainable Agriculture

The Advisory Committee was created by in 2009 by the 61st Legislative Assembly.

This Advisory Committee has met only twice, over a decade ago, in 2009 and 2010. After these two meetings, the consensus of the Advisory Committee was that:

1. A viable comprehensive definition of "sustainability" would need to be developed and adopted.
2. The sustainability certification program would not be beneficial to most North Dakota producers and, if implemented, would potentially only benefit a very small number of producers.
 - a. Producers who market their commodities directly overseas would benefit from this program much more than a producer who sold their commodities at a local elevator.
 - b. A local elevator is unlikely to pay any premium for a commodity that has a sustainable agriculture certificate that would be of very little benefit to that elevator.
3. Implementing the sustainability certification program and the effective marketing and packaging of products containing that certification would be extremely cost prohibitive.
4. The development and implementation of any related sustainable certification program should be suspended -- and instead efforts would be better focused on research, as well as education and promotion of sustainable farming and ranching.

In my view, this pragmatic consensus regarding the Advisory Committee continues. The Advisory Committee would provide minimal if any value to North Dakota agriculture. It would not benefit State producers selling commodities to an average commercial consumer who is not willing to pay extra for a commodity with a certification. The substantial costs of the administering the Advisory Committee and implementing a related sustainability certification program, and the related marketing and packaging of products containing the certification, would outweigh any perceived benefits obtained.

Moreover, many North Dakota farmers already utilize numerous innovative sustainable agricultural farming practices such as:

- (1) Low or no-till conservation farming which reduces erosion, while also retaining nutrients in the soil and sequestering carbon. This farming consistently method builds organic matter;
- (2) Efficient water irrigation management that saves water and energy costs, reduces nutrient leaching, and increases crop yields and grain quality;
- (3) Recurrent planting of cover crops that keeps living roots structures in the soil, lessening erosion through retaining more water, reducing surface runoff, and supporting biological activity throughout the growing season;
- (4) Effective rotating of a variety of crops that redeposits differing critical soil nutrients in addition to breaking up pathogen and insect life cycles which consequently decrease pesticide requirements; and,
- (5) Precision fertilizer management which reduces input costs & potential nitrogen loads and sustains water quality.

Many North Dakota ranchers similarly already employ numerous sustainable ranching practices, including, among others:

- (1) Rotational grazing rangeland management that integrates livestock into regenerative grazing systems – all of which improves grassland soil health and herd health, boosts the efficiency of livestock production, and mitigates gas emissions;
- (2) Pasture management that prevents over-grazing, and that enriches and sustains forage quality; and,
- (3) Enhanced manure management including efficient land application.

In the last legislative session, North Dakota Century Code 4.1-01-11 was sensibly changed from stating the Commissioner “shall” appoint an Advisory Committee to the Commissioner “may” appoint the Committee. This minor change provided the flexibility for the Advisory Committee to meet again in the future should the agriculture community find it worthwhile in doing so.

Since this change, because of its limited value, our state’s agricultural community has not requested the Advisory Committee to convene. In short, the Advisory Committee continues to be unnecessary and it is unlikely to be of any significant value added to North Dakota agriculture in the future. Accordingly, I respectfully support Senate Bill 2027.

Chairman Luick and Committee members, thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 2027. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

COMMISSIONER
DOUG GOEHRING



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Testimony of Doug Goehring
North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner
House Agriculture Committee
SB 2027
03/16/2023

Chairman Thomas and members of the Agriculture Committee, I am Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring. I support Senate Bill 2027, repealing NDCC 4.1-01-11 which is the Advisory Committee on Sustainable Agriculture. The Advisory Committee was created in 2009 by the 61st Legislative Assembly. This Advisory Committee has met only twice, in 2009 and 2010. After these two meetings, the consensus of the Committee was that:

1. A comprehensive definition of “sustainability” would need to be developed and adopted.
2. The sustainability certification program would not be beneficial to most North Dakota producers.
3. Implementing the sustainability certification program and the effective marketing and packaging of products containing that certification would be extremely cost prohibitive.
4. The development and implementation of any related sustainable certification program should be suspended and instead efforts should be better focused on research, education and promotion of sustainable farming and ranching.

The Advisory Committee would provide little value to North Dakota agriculture. Moreover, many North Dakota farmers and ranchers already utilize numerous innovative sustainable agricultural practices.

Chairman Thomas and Committee members, thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 2027. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.