November 28, 2017

SBARE Stakeholder Written Testimony
NDSU-Ext. & ND Ag Experiment Stations NDSU
Dept 7520 PO Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

SBARE and To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your time and interest in the future of North Dakota.

As a county board tied to agriculture and natural resources, we would like to express our concern on the direction of NDSU Extension Service and ND Ag Experiment Stations. Like most county SCDs, we are very close and active with our county extension. Over the past few years we have implemented numerous programs and projects with their partnership. Diversity, Direction & Dollars Farm Workshops along with other Ag & Natural Resources Workshops/Tours, Educational Range Judging Camps and Land Resource Camps, Cover Crop Projects, 4-H activities, and Tree Planting Research, to name just a few. These events have brought education and awareness from youth to senior citizens. Without the 2 organizations working together utilizing funds, resources, and volunteers, these would not have been possible to start or continue.

On the state level we are very fortunate to have NDSU-Extension deliver our District Assistance Grant and have the State Soil Conservation Committee. That position has allowed the districts to operate and stay on track with all the information needed on the state level. Most recently, the Consolidation of our two Districts. Without the assistance in the process of consolidation, the task wouldn’t have gone as smoothly as it did. The State Soil Conservation Committee has assisted the Districts in retaining and training good board members and staff as well as reaching potential employees, our local water resource boards, and other county and federal staff such as NRCS. The Ag Experiment Stations provide us with data for our program deliverables and also to help implement new projects.

We need the NDSU-Extension to assist the SCDs on a local level as well as state. Budget cuts are inevitable, but ND is a grass roots-roots on the ground state. We are lucky to have a land grant university that provides information to the rural Ag communities on so many levels. Teaching the next generations as well as the current, on all the possibilities in the Ag and rural community sector. The scope of duties that Extension encompasses is untouchable by any other organization and they need to be there for all the great partnerships they have formed. Without them, many other organizations longevity will be in the air.

We ask that you recommend to the Legislature and the Governor that an investment in NDSU-Extension is an investment in ND rural communities, counties, and our great state.

With much appreciation,

Bonnie T. Twogood, District Manager

Stark and Billings Soil Conservation District