

NDFB 2021

Legislative Assembly Review

NDFB is very pleased to report an outstanding record of achievements again this year. While each Legislative Assembly has its challenges, we have fended off a few issues which could have been harmful to rural North Dakota and enjoyed great success in the passage of a variety of bills on topics our members have identified as vital to the continued success of agriculture in N.D.

A high degree of uncertainty surrounded the opening of the 67th North Dakota Legislative Assembly: New rules and operating procedures were put in place to address concerns surrounding the Covid-19 crisis and a new federal administration compounded some of those anxieties. Committee rooms which had been used in the past were abandoned this session as being too small for proper social distancing and both House and Senate committees were scheduled to meet in a variety of new places. The rules for lobbyist and the general public were also revised which complicated the interaction between business groups, organizations and the voting public, legislators and state officials. This interaction between all the stakeholders, both elected and private, is vital to our legislative process.

We are fortunate our legislative leadership team recognized the importance of public interaction within our process and prioritized maintaining the session in a manner which allowed all parties to be engaged. A new system for virtual testimony was available to allow citizens or lobbyist to testify remotely, and legislators could also use the system if health or other reasons caused them to be absent from meetings. People adapted to the new parameters and the mechanisms of the process actually worked in a fairly ‘normal’ way. As the session wore on all the stakeholders adapted to the changes, and eventually several of the rules were relaxed. By the end, people were comfortable with the adaptations and the general activities surrounding the Assembly went along in a routine way.

As with any legislative session, certain issues and priorities drive many of the topics being proposed or acted upon and generally these priorities have some connection to state spending. This isn’t always the case; there are important issues that are not related to state finances, but at the end of the session the last bills to be settled and passed are overwhelmingly tied to budgets. In North Dakota, legislative leaders are frugal by nature and our budgets have remained fairly cautious with spending as compared to other states.

One of our greatest champions in controlling state spending is Representative Jeff Delzer (R), Underwood. As Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, he is constantly looking out for the taxpayers while managing the State’s responsibilities. In addition to Delzer’s efforts, we are also appreciative of the work done by several committee chairs, including Senator Larry Luick (R), Fairmount, Chair of the Senate Ag Committee, Representative Dennis Johnson (R), Devils Lake, Chair of the House Ag Committee, and Representative Craig Headland (R), Montpelier, Chair of the House Committee of Finance and Tax. These key committee chairs along with their leaders, Senate Majority Leader Rich Wardner (R), Dickinson and House Majority Leader Chet Pollert (R), Carrington, have proven to be true friends of Farm Bureau and we owe much of our success to their leadership.

Our Greatest Successes

NDFB hit the ground running this session with early successes on a number of issues. Some of our greatest victories came from bills that went unnoticed by the general public, and these low-profile bills will have long-lasting positive impact on animal agriculture in North Dakota.

Animal Agriculture Development

Two of NDFB's greatest victories this session will clear away some of the monkey business used by counties to block animal ag expansion in N.D. [SB 2216](#) standardized legal terms and codified the Supreme Court ruling on our legal victory over Pelican Township, Ramsey County. The court found there was no definition for "zoned...for...purpose" in century code and replacing it with "zoned district" would fix the confusion and eliminate unnecessary litigation. This fix will limit the blocking techniques used by townships and counties to limit livestock operations.

In a related victory, [HB 1103](#) was amended in reaction to our court case, adding language which will prevent the Department of Health from issuing permits which could adversely impact a livestock siting application. What this translates to is: If a farmer has a livestock siting application awaiting approval by the Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Health cannot bump to the front of the line a later-filed application for a campground, simply to use the campground application to deny the livestock permit. This is one of the tactics used in the past by anti-animal ag interests, and this effort by Representative Bill Devlin, (R) Finley, takes another arrow out of the quiver of those who have constantly used such tactical roadblocks to oppose our livestock industry.

We believe these simple clarifications in legal phrasing will reduce the opportunity of those who oppose livestock operations, and clear one more legal hurdle for those seeking to grow North Dakota agriculture.

Electronic Posting

NDFB had a partial victory in the passage of a bill nearly 30 years in the making. [SB 2036](#) and [SB 2144](#) give landowners an electronic option to post their land. While it is disappointing to not completely fulfill our policy of "all lands considered posted regardless of signage," these bills represent a step in the right direction toward our long-term policy objective. Landowners will be able to electronically post their land which will remove any deniability tactics used by trespassers in the past and language was added to clearly define what a "fence" means. (*NDFB policy #1763/19, 704.06*)

Stand Your Ground

An NDFB priority was fulfilled in the passage of "Stand Your Ground" legislation. Two bills were introduced removing the responsibility of victims from fleeing attackers. [HB 1498](#) and [HB 1193](#) were sponsored to fulfill our policy, but HB 1498 sponsored by Rep. B. Koppelman (R), West Fargo, prevailed and passed both chambers. With passage, North Dakota joins 36 other states with similar legislation instead of being one of 14 states that have a duty to retreat. (*NDFB policy #2428, 406.06*)

Legislative Accountability to Governor's Executive Orders

Legislators made a commitment from day one of the session to pass a bill to provide legislative accountability to the governor's executive orders. Three bills were introduced at the beginning of session:

- Sponsored by Rep. K. Koppelman (R), West Fargo, [HB 1495](#) included language to restrict the governor's authority and limited county ability to declare a state of emergency. Senate members were concerned the bill would restrict local authority and HB 1495 died in the Senate 6 - 41.
- [SB 2124](#) was sponsored by Janne Myrdal (R), Edinburg, had more "teeth" directing the use of funds during an emergency along with providing legislative accountability, but it was hoghoused by the House and the bill sponsor requested defeat of the bill in the Senate.
- [HB 1118](#) was the remaining bill and its **passage fulfilled NDFB policy**. The bill sponsored by Rep. Devlin (R), Finley, says if a state of emergency related to public health is declared when the Legislature is not in session, legislative management can request the governor to call a special session. If the governor does not declare a special session within 7 days of the request, legislative management can end the state of emergency 30 days after the request from legislative management. (*NDFB policy #2467/21, 404.01*)

Game & Fish Policing State Land

At the request of the Land Commissioner, [HB 1081](#) was introduced to give the Game and Fish policing authority over state lands. The Department of Trust Lands still manages 706,600 acres of land which is primarily leased for agricultural producers. The land department requested the bill be introduced to deal with some isolated violations of rules on state land and would create a "Memorandum of Understanding" after session with Game and Fish, including how much the state would pay Game and Fish. Although the land department claimed game wardens would only enforce administrative rules and would not be allowed to interfere with grazing management, we believe policing authority belongs with local law enforcement and is outside of the mission of Game and Fish. There was also no fiscal note attached to the bill.

NDFB worked House members aggressively on the bill and had commitments from enough Representatives to kill [HB 1081](#) on the House floor. However, proponents could read the writing on the wall and asked that the bill be re-referred to the Energy & Natural Resources Committee for reconsideration. The bill was amended to put the administrative rules in code to clarify local sheriff departments could enforce the rules.

Annual Sessions - DEFEATED

NDFB celebrated a victory with the death of [SB 2218](#) which would have allowed for an annual legislature. NDFB worked aggressively to defeat the bill which survived the Senate by a narrow margin. While this topic has been brought up by multiple legislative assemblies over the last 40 years, it has never garnered as much support as it has in this session. (*NDFB policy #2057/19, 409.15*)

Another bill relating to this topic was vetoed by the Governor. [HB 1378](#) would have allowed the Legislature to meet for business following their organizational session in December of each election year. In reality, this bill would have had very little impact because it would be impractical to think any meaningful legislation could be vetted and voted upon in the three weeks prior to the regular start of any

session. With Majority Leader Chet Pollert's efforts, the veto on HB 1378 was sustained and our policy was upheld.

Our Disappointments

Transfer of Animal Agriculture Siting

We hoped for the transfer of livestock siting from the Department of Environmental Quality to the Department of Agriculture to be fulfilled in [HB 1115](#). Unfortunately, the transfer and change in the presidential administration could have opened our state to an argument with the EPA on primacy. The bill was wisely withdrawn. *(NDFB Policy # 2476/21, 203.01)*

Open Fields Doctrine

[HB 1340](#) attempted to eliminate the open fields doctrine and protect property owners from unwarranted search. Some understood the simple private property aspect to the bill, others were concerned that, the way the bill was written, case law could be opposed and would prevent law enforcers from conducting routine functions which led to the defeat of the bill. Working with other statewide groups, there may be a solution to this problem in future legislative sessions. *(NDFB policy #2474, 801.01)*

Other Victories for NDFB and Agriculture

Water

Water issues always make a splash during the legislative session, and this year was no different. NDFB opposed a bad bill, supported a good bill, and monitored a bill.

Water Study

We had success in amending a bill that would have rolled-back the great progress NDFB has made in water legislation. [SB 2208](#) attempted to fix a local situation and attempted to align similar portions of code but included language which made the bill problematic for everyone. Discussion around the bill revealed some inconsistencies in water legislation and board management across the state, and the bill was amended into a massive mandatory study for all stakeholders to look at the issue during the interim. Agriculture producers will have two voting seats on the study committee, which will be appointed by the Ag Commissioner. *(NDFB Policy ID#: 2394/20, 709.03)*

Tiling

Since 2017, the legislature has been working to improve water management laws. [HB 1437](#) as passed eases the permitting process for projects over 80 acres, creates rules for reporting projects under 80 acres, and includes a cost-share provision for assessment drains.

NDFB supported the bill only after the initial talk of requiring a permit for projects less than 80 acres was removed from the bill and replaced with a reporting requirement. During the conference committee process, the House and the Senate came to a lengthy disagreement centered around the sub-80 acre projects reporting requirement. After several meetings, members reached a compromise to exclude projects less than 80 acres from reporting requirements if the water drains into a basin completely

enclosed by a producer's land. The notification requirement will expire December 31, 2022. (NDFB policy #2394/20, 709.03)

Culverts

Sometimes local personalities can get in the way of good governance and SB 2324 was introduced to solve such a problem. The law currently requires a political subdivision to install a culvert of appropriate size to water demands, but a local township official refused to put in the right sized culvert. [SB 2324](#) was introduced to add more of an enforcement mechanism to force the township to act before the matter goes to court. The bill failed in the House since they did not see the need to change the law for an isolated situation.

General Agriculture

Farm Home Tax Exemption and Potato Storage Tax

A hog-housed bill was a victory for ag producers when SB 2041 was amended to fix a residual problem with the federal tax change that affected the farm home tax exemption. If a producer sells machinery, he must report the sale as income and the sale of that equipment is then considered non-farm income. Although legislation from 2019 changed the formula to a producer's gross income rather than net to capture many of these situations, some producers were still unable to qualify for their tax exemption since the sale of their equipment put their income over the threshold. An amendment was added to remove "gain from machinery sales" from the gross income of a producer and should enable these producers to receive their farm home exemption. (NDFB Policy #2416/21, 501.01)

The bill was originally introduced to provide property tax relief for potato warehouses as some areas of the state are inconsistent when assessing potato warehouses. The House Finance and Tax Committee had some concerns with the bill and feared it would place too much pressure on other taxpayers in the community and amended the bill into a study to see if local governments are unfairly assessing warehouses so any discrepancies could be addressed in future legislation. (NDFB Policy #2416/21, 501.01)

Soil Conservation Program

The defeat of [SB 2342](#) preserved the integrity of landowner stewardship in N.D. The bill ambiguously defined soil health and created a new grant which did not take into account how soil health varies dramatically across the state. We believe management is the most efficient when sought out and implemented by the producer rather than legislating soil health.

Veterinary Medicine

Our policy was fulfilled with [SB 2140](#) to fix the financing provision for students who are pursuing a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree. North Dakota does not have a veterinarian school and all students pursuing a DVM must go out of state. This program has helped DVM students for 40 years but was removed from the state budget in the last days of the 2019 session. NDFB asked the Legislature not to punish the DVM program based on the record of other professional recipients of the program, the optometrists and dentists. The program has a good track record with many veterinary students coming

back to practice in North Dakota. (NDFB Policy #2266/19, 604.06; 2201/21, 604.01; 2313/19, 604.05; 2061/19, 604.08)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Easements

A study in [HCR 3019](#) was passed to look at the effects of U.S. Fish and Wildlife easements on North Dakota infrastructure. U.S. Fish and Wildlife mismanagement of lands in perpetual easements have cost counties and townships hundreds of thousands of dollars in road maintenance. (NDFB Policy #1693/21, 702.01 and #1747/19, 702.04)

Long Combination Vehicle Study

The legislature adopted a pilot project to study the feasibility of licensing long combination vehicles, also known as “road trains.” The pilot project will look at economic benefits and road impact, types of trucks compatible with North Dakota’s road system, and various hauling configurations legal in Canada. The project in [SB 2026](#) will consider if long combination vehicles could be added as a tool in the transportation of ag products. (NDFB policy # 2117/20, 302.02)

Mitigation Money

The Environmental Impact Mitigation Fund was created last session from a discussion that came directly from our delegate floor. Producers have had issues with environmental groups pushing to place wind towers only with preference to wildlife instead of consideration for land value. [HB 1158](#) is a continuation of this effort and the bill passed to provide technical support in creating mitigation projects to have less of an impact on agriculture. The bill split mitigation dollars into two funds: 50% to the fund and 50% to the federal environmental impact mitigation fund. (NDFB policy #2355/20, 705.01)

Value-Added Agriculture Fund

HB 1475 established a new “Agriculture Development and Diversification” fund to provide loans and grants to agricultural projects. There was some question why a new fund was necessary with the thriving success of APUC and NDFB has a policy encouraging groups to utilize APUC for obtaining grants. The fund would have taken a hefty 20% of the legacy fund earnings but was pared down to a much more modest \$10 million. (NDFB Policy # 2173/20, 103.05)

Intermodal Transportation Hub

[SB 2245](#) provided one-time spending of \$2 million for an intermodal transportation hub in Minot. Improvements to the Minot intermodal facility are viewed as positive in the grand scheme of things for North Dakota agriculture. While we may not agree with the spending involved, the bill does enhance rail transportation infrastructure which could benefit commodity producers in our state.

Predator Control

The passage of [HB 1411](#), sponsored by Rep. Tveit (R), Hazen, clarifies a producer has the right during any time of the year to control predators attempting to destroy livestock. (NDFB Policy #1267/21, 706.02)

Raw milk

[HB 1244](#) to license the sale of raw milk could have potentially placed more regulations on milk producers over the cow-share program currently in place for raw milk. The bill would not have accomplished what some hoped for: to make North Dakota like other states where raw milk is available for sale on the shelves. Instead, it would have created an unintentional regulatory nightmare and the bill failed. (*NDFB Policy #408.02, 1895/20*)

Private Property

Civil Asset Forfeiture

Last session, Rep. Becker (R), Bismarck, spearheaded improvements to state civil asset forfeiture proceedings to bring transparency to the forfeiture process. Civil forfeiture is often used to dispose of property left over from criminal activity, such as drug paraphernalia and items belonging to a convict. This makes sense for property belonging to criminals, but in rural areas, there is opportunity for abuse which makes some civil forfeitures a problem. Two pieces of legislation were introduced to clarify and further improve the process, [HB 1480](#) and [HB 1261](#). House Bill 1261 was melded into HB 1480 and the bill **passed** without much opposition in either chamber. (*NDFB Policy #2192/21, 406.09*)

General Government

Speed Limits

Our policy was preserved with the defeat of HB [1315](#), a bill to raise speed limits to 80 mph and set a minimum limit of 40 mph. The failure of this measure preserves NDFB policy and leaves our current speed limits unchanged. (*NDFB Policy #2304/19; 406.18*)

Constitutional Amendments

During the NDFB 2020 Annual Meeting, we had lively discussion about how to maintain the integrity of our constitutional amendment process. [SCR 4005](#) was introduced and was very similar to our policy, and while the resolution sailed through the Senate, the House rejected the resolution because a citizens organization came forward to sponsor a similar constitutional amendment.

The citizen's group "Protect North Dakota's Constitution" has filed a ballot initiative to amend the constitution. The amendment has two parts: 1. Proposed constitutional amendments may not consist of more than one subject. 2. Constitutional amendments must receive 60% of the statewide vote to amend our State Constitution. The group has reached out to NDFB for support and we will continue to monitor their efforts over the year. (*NDFB Policy # 409.02, 2421/21*)

Legislator Appointment in Case of Death

During the 2020 election when a candidate-elect passed away, Governor Burgum decided to go against the District's appointment despite recommendations against doing so by other lawmakers. The issue was taken up by the attorney general, who determined the governor's actions were unconstitutional. [HB 1461](#) codifies the AG's decision in case the issue ever arises again.

Mask Mandate

HB 1323 passed to prohibit state officials, such as the governor or state health officer, from issuing mask mandates. The governor vetoed the bill but both chambers overrode the Governor's veto. *(NDFB Policy #2424/21, 404.02)*

Gas Tax

The gas tax hasn't been raised since 2005 when it was raised \$.02 and [HB 1464](#) attempted to raise the gas tax by \$.03. Advocates of increasing the tax referred to poor infrastructure, particularly rural roads across the state while opponents of increasing the tax believed the state has other ways to fund infrastructure and a gas tax raise was not necessary. The bill died in the Senate 16-29. *(NDFB Policy # 2281/19, 404.02)*

State Land Advisory Board

[HB 1269](#) would have created an advisory board to oversee the management of the State Land leasing process to provide agriculture input to the Land Board. There was some concern about the fiscal note who would serve on the board if the bill passed and the bill died in the House 3-88. *(NDFB Policy 707.09, 981/19)*

Of NDFB Interest

Redistricting

In the year following the decennial census, legislative district lines are redrawn to adjust for population changes. [HB 1397](#) sets up a special session for this fall dealing with redistricting. Preserving rural districts and keeping communities intact will be a primary concern as the redistricting process proceeds.

Land Board Membership

Actions taken by the University and Trust Land Department motivated the sponsorship of [SB 2282](#) and [SCR 4007](#) to add the Ag Commissioner to the Land Board. The Land Board manages over 700,000 of acres rented by 4,400 farmers and ranchers across the state. The Board has had a bad track record of taking agricultural input and even with all of the acres the Land Board manages, there is currently no board member who specializes in agricultural land management. The committee was generally amenable to adding the Ag Commissioner to the board but wanted to consider the issue more and amended the bill into a study to look at board membership. *(NDFB Policy #2268/19, 702.03)*

Beef Checkoff and Grant Program

The Beef Commission was under scrutiny this session in [HB 1487](#), pertaining to the Beef Checkoff which would have removed the mandatory \$1 check-off which goes to the State Beef Commission. The opposition to the bill argued the fee is refundable, and the Beef Commission's structure should remain similar to the other commodity commissions. Proponents believed the fee should be optional and the commission could do a better job with transparency and promotion. The bill **failed** in the House after lengthy debate 41-53. A study was added to the Agriculture Commissioner's budget to study the effectiveness of the beef commission. *(NDFB policy #2093/19, 104.02)*

Outdoor Heritage Fund

NDFB has a seat on the Outdoor Heritage Fund which awards grants to conservation projects across the state. [HB 1215](#) was introduced to take some of the funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund to put in a loan program for projects to apply for funding. Stakeholder groups including NDFB were concerned the bill would deviate from the original purpose of the OHF and the bill died.

Energy

Grid Reliability

North Dakota is part of a multi-state power grid, and ND citizens experienced outages across the state when areas of Texas powered by wind and solar were non-operational. This placed stress on the grid which caused parts of our state to power down to protect the grid from overload. Even before the power outages, lawmakers have become increasingly concerned with the reliability of our grid and House and Senate leadership sponsored SB 2313 to “firm up” the grid by requiring renewable energy wind and solar to have other energy sources coal and natural gas to back them up. Renewables hotly opposed this requirement and the final version passed into law requires the state to create yearly reports about the grid.

Underground Storage

[SB 2065](#) was introduced regarding the emerging topic of underground storage. The legislation requires the storage operator to have permission from at least 55% of the storage space owners and requires all landowners to be compensated for use of their pore space. (*NDFB policy #2378/20, 801.09*)

Notice to Landowners

It often takes years for companies to develop wind and other energy facilities and landowners affected by the project are often unaware of its development. [SB 2263](#) requires these companies to provide notice to all landowners who own land or are affected by the corridor when an application is filed.

State Investments

[SB 2291](#) holds the state accountable for its investment decisions. The bill provides accountability to discourage the state from investing in companies which are anti-energy or anti-agriculture. The bill is a great collaboration between energy and agriculture to assure our state will not invest based on political correctness.

Natural Gas Infrastructure

[HB 1159](#) passed to study natural gas infrastructure development needs across the state. (*NDFB Legislative Task-Force Priority*)

Local Government

Townships Tax Themselves

Many townships are facing serious infrastructure challenges and the passage of [HB 1157](#) authorizes townships to tax themselves in the case of a natural disaster to fix infrastructure not eligible for other forms of funding. The tax must be passed by the majority of the electors of the township and other requirements. (*NDFB Policy #2166/20, 301.03*)

Rolette County Aid

County budgets are also affected by the legislative session and some counties receive less funding because of the geographical makeup of the county. While the government provides funding to counties for state land, there is no money paid to the county on behalf of tribal lands. Rolette County in particular suffers because of the expansive tribal lands and the passage of [HB 1449](#) provides relief to Rolette County so they can continue to offer basic services.

Dissolution of Schools

When a school district is disbanding, it's important to dissolve the assets of the school in a way that makes sense for all the taxpayers of the area. The passage of [HB 1337](#) gives authority to a county committee to give the building to the city or county to use as a community center or other use to benefit the county in some way. If the county is able to sell the building, the money from the sale will be redistributed to the taxpayers.

Agriculture Code Updates

Several bills are introduced during the session to update sections of code pertaining to various agency programs.

Soybean Council

Since the production of soybeans is expanding to other parts of the state, [SB 1145](#) gives the Soybean Council authority to redistrict to more accurately represent soybean producers in the state. The bill also makes technical changes to the beginning dates for board member service, earlier start date for mailing in ballots, and clarifies a board member must live in the district they represent.

Specialty Fertilizer Licensing

Several years ago, the Legislature gave specialty fertilizer producers an exemption for licensing and reporting requirements for small fertilizer sales of 25 lbs. or less. Unfortunately, the way the bill was written allowed large commercial distributors, such as Walmart to be exempt from reporting requirements. HB 1197 fixed the language to require large distributors to report the fertilizer when they bring it into North Dakota while retaining the small producer exemption.

Grain Licensing Program

Some follow-up legislation was needed following last session's move of the grain dealer licensing program from the Public Service Commission to the North Dakota Department of Agriculture. [HB 1026](#) was viewed by grain dealers and producers alike as a positive code update.

Pesticide Application

During the 2020 year, NDSU Extension was also unable to hold certification and recertification meetings for restricted-use pesticide applications which prohibited producers from being recertified to continue normal farming practices. HB 1338 gives the Pesticide Control Board authority to give extensions to producers in times of crises.

Industrial Hemp

Every session, the ag department introduces bills to update language regarding the hemp licensing program. Industrial hemp has such a low THC content, it cannot be used on its own to get high. However, there have been some issues with the growing popularity of Delta-8, a substance derived from CBD. Discovered in 1974, the drug has been growing in popularity which brought to light there are loopholes in law which allow for drug usage in most state laws. In conference, the committee amended [HB 1045](#) to clarify Delta-8 THC is not a legal substance. This change should not create any issues for our industrial hemp producers as the THC of hemp grown in the field is low enough to not create a problem.

Budget

As the session wrapped up, we knew the final bills to be passed would be budgets, primarily the budget for the Office Management and Budget. Agency budgets often take a while to negotiate, and some give-and-take is expected in each case. At the beginning of the session, there was a lot of uncertainty about where budgets would fall, particularly with the large infusions of money from the federal government. Because of the federal funds, spending has greatly outpaced other sessions. The breakdown of the spending of the federal relief money is found in [HB 1395](#).

Here's a snapshot of budgets of interest to NDFB:

[HB 1009](#) - **Agriculture Commissioner's Budget** - One of our NDFB policies has been fulfilled this session by [HB 1009](#) providing the agriculture commissioner with in-house counsel. The attorney is an important addition to the ag department to provide the commissioner with solid legal advice as he sites important agriculture development projects across the state. The commissioner can consult his in-house counsel rather than solely depending on the legal counsel of the attorney general which may or may not be concerned with agriculture.

The Legislature also funded a soil health cover crop grant and gave the commissioner authority to apply for additional Outdoor Heritage Funds. There is also a \$5 million provision for grasslands grazing grants to make improvements to federal grasslands which can include water development, fencing, cross fencing, etc. The Ag Commissioner will create rules for the program. The budget also includes a study to look at the effectiveness of the N.D. Beef Commission.

[HB 1017](#) - **Game and Fish Department** - A little known fact, the Game and Fish Department is entirely funded by fees and not general fund dollars; no North Dakota general fund money goes to pay for the department. Most of the funding comes from the purchases of licenses and federal tax on ammunition. The portion of the Game and Fish budget of interest to NDFB is the funding for electronic posting. Much of the infrastructure for the program was developed by the department over the interim and will continue to be by the Game and Fish IT people on staff.

[SB 2020](#) - **Extension Budget** - Extension services have been sufficiently funded this session fulfilling our policy ID#: 1098/19, 103.10 and several programs were enhanced. The bill refunded money to soil conservation districts which was reduced several years ago and approved capital Improvements to the Langdon Experiment Station and the Central Grasslands Research Station.

SB 2030 - Grant Funding for NDSU - The bill appropriated more than \$11 million of grant funds to the State Board of Higher Education to award to institutions. The bill also contains a component to prohibit the board from awarding grants to groups or individuals who promote abortions and may not sponsor publishing any material from a group that promotes abortions. *(NDFB Policy #2371/20, 602.03)*

SB 2018 - Department of Commerce - Early in the session, we discussed [SB 2171](#) to transfer the international trade office from the Department of Commerce to the Department of Agriculture. NDFB chatted with Ag Commissioner Goehring about this transfer on Straight Talk with NDFB about the importance of the trade office to North Dakota. The language for transfer was moved to the Department of Commerce budget, [SB 2018](#).

HB 1431 - Bonding - One of the bills to receive the most attention is [HB 1431](#), the bill which allows the state to bond for infrastructure needs and other legislative commitments across the state. The bill included \$50 million for NDSU for the Agriculture Products Development Center, \$70 million for highways and bridges, and \$435.5 million for the Fargo diversion.

HB 1015 - Office of Management and Budget - The OMB Budget is one of the largest budgets to pass every session. The budget serves as a catch-all for budget items that don't find a home in another budget. This bill was of particular interest to NDFB as it contained the \$30,000,000 for the townships. It also contained \$250,000 for Dickinson State University for a meat cutting program. *(NDFB Policy #2452/2, 604.05 and ID#: 2166/20, 604.06)*

Final Comments

NDFB members should be very satisfied with the work of the 2021 Legislative Assembly. Focusing on our priority issues and other policies, we had a successful session overall with a high percent of implementation. Although not every priority issue or policy was under consideration, our success rate on issues covered during the legislative session would rival any other statewide group. Our members can be proud of our organizational accomplishments.