

**SENATE BILL NO. 2379**

Introduced by

Senators Bowman, G. Nelson, Wanzek

Representatives Belter, Pietsch

1 A BILL for an Act to provide for a value-added agriculture entrepreneur program.

2 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

3 **SECTION 1. Value-added agriculture entrepreneur program.**

- 4 1. The value-added agriculture entrepreneur screening board is established. The  
5 board consists of five members as follows: the director of the department of  
6 economic development and finance or the director's representative; a  
7 representative of the state board of agricultural research and education, appointed  
8 by the governor; a representative of the state board of higher education,  
9 designated by the board; a representative of the Bank of North Dakota, appointed  
10 by the governor; and a representative of the private sector, appointed by the  
11 governor.
- 12 2. The board shall administer the value-added agriculture entrepreneur program and  
13 shall review business plans for value-added agriculture projects. The board shall  
14 adopt procedures and guidelines for administering the program. In order to be  
15 eligible for review by the board, a business plan must be created by an  
16 entrepreneur with the cooperation of a local or regional economic development  
17 organization. The local or regional economic development organization may  
18 contract with colleges, universities, the private sector, and the public sector in  
19 assisting with creating a business plan. Upon review of a project, the board shall  
20 determine whether to approve the project.
- 21 3. If a project is approved by the board, the board shall appoint a financing group for  
22 the project. The financing group must include representatives of the private sector,  
23 a representative of the Bank of North Dakota, and an individual experienced in  
24 grant writing. The financing group, with active assistance provided by any of the

1 state's institutions of higher education and the local or regional economic  
2 development organization, shall assist the entrepreneur in improving the business  
3 plan for the project and in seeking grant money. The financing group shall assist  
4 the entrepreneur with the approved project in pursuing the business plan and shall  
5 assist the entrepreneur in seeking grants to reimburse the state's institutions of  
6 higher education for any assistance provided in creating the business plan and to  
7 fund the project development. The screening board representative of the state  
8 board of higher education shall ensure that the state's institutions of higher  
9 education collect data on the success of each project.

10 4. The value-added agriculture entrepreneur program is located in the department of  
11 economic development and finance. The department shall provide any necessary  
12 administrative assistance. Members of the screening board and a financing group  
13 are entitled to reimbursement for mileage and travel as specified in section  
14 54-06-09 and expenses as specified in section 44-08-04 for performing their duties.