

COMMISSIONER  
DOUG GOEHRING



[ndda@nd.gov](mailto:ndda@nd.gov)  
[www.nd.gov/ndda](http://www.nd.gov/ndda)

**NORTH DAKOTA  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

STATE CAPITOL  
600 E. BOULEVARD AVE. – DEPT. 602  
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0020

**SB 2245 Testimony  
Doug Goehring  
Agriculture Commissioner  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Roughrider Room  
January 26, 2021**

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Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring and I am here to support Senate Bill 2245.

SB 2245 would provide funds to develop an intermodal transportation assistance program. The pursuit of intermodal rail services started over twenty years ago. Intermodal rail services in Minot have been utilized to bring products into the state for manufacturers, service companies, and the energy industry. At its peak, North Dakota agriculture benefitted greatly when containers could be captured and used versus being shipped and utilized in another part of the country.

The single greatest advantage to intermodal systems for agriculture is identity preservation where buyers are purchasing a very specific product with specific traits. Intermodal shipping also has the advantage of being manageable quantities for businesses that are unable to handle a Panamax or large bulk shipments. Intermodal containers are right sized to thousands of businesses that have the potential to be a destination point for North Dakota goods. These containers can also be offloaded from ships with a final destination point deep inside a country where traditional transportation lines are limited or almost nonexistent. Intermodal systems can also be used for shipping irrigation equipment, conveyors, construction and agricultural equipment, as well as livestock equipment.

The greatest hurdles that exist with an intermodal system are derived from a lack of population, lack of attention by steamship companies, and a very expensive repositioning fee. Many things have happened since July 2020 that have created opportunities with growing industries. We are turning a corner on seven years of low commodity prices, have new trade agreements and a weakening dollar which gives strength to our export markets.

Chairman Holmberg and committee members, thank you and I will stand for questions.