Carrington, March 11, 2023

Re: HB1515

Good morning Chairman and members of the Senate Agriculture and Veteran Affairs Committee,

My name is Conny van Bedaf. Together with my husband, our children and their spouses, I own and operate a dairy farm and creamery in Carrington. I also serve as the president of the Milk Producers Association of North Dakota.

I am writing to express my opposition and that of the Milk Producers Association of ND, to the latest version of HB1515, which prioritizes Food Freedom over Food Safety.

Dairy farmers of the USA went through great lengths to promote and educate the safety of milk. I don't want our State to adopt a law that could possibly hurt our efforts.

I would strongly encourage you to read an investigative article in the Daily Montanan, for which I included a link below.

A short summary of this article:

In 2021, the same year Montana adopted their latest raw milk legislation, contaminated milk from a small dairy caused severe illness in three consumers. The producer was devastated because of the illness his milk had caused but also because he didn't have the knowledge to locate the problem on his farm. The legislation had left both the department of agriculture and the department of health without authority to investigate and correct unsanitary conditions and warn other consumers.

Mark Mcafee, the president of the Raw Milk Institute was quoted regarding this incident: "This dairy's problems are exactly what can happen when laws are passed in the name of freedom without any regulation and/or education. Not only are there no rules, but it hamstrings the State from implementing some reasonable safety precautions, which raw milk producers generally support. Montana's law contains NO standards. The outcome of this incident was totally predictable."

https://dailymontanan.com/2022/04/18/montana-sees-10-cases-of-raw-milk-illness-in-past-two-years/#:~:text=An%20investigation%20by%20the%20Daily%20Montanan%20has%20found,to%20a%20Park%20County%20dairy%20late%20in%202021.