

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

February 7, 2012

Chairman Carlson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Carl Sousek. I'm a farmer from Prague, located in Saunders County and the current President of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association. The NeCGA is a membership organization based on grassroots principles who advocate for the good of our industry on all levels.

In 1978, the corn check off program was created. For 34 years the Nebraska Corn Board has exhibited exceptional ability to prioritize and utilize the resources created by those check off dollars. With today's changing economy, so have the needs of our industry changed. Research, market development, education and promotion are needed to keep the Nebraska corn industry competitive on both national and international levels. Further financial resources are needed in order to accomplish this task.

Speaking on behalf of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association and its members, we support the increase in the current check off rate to ½ cent. Our Association at our annual meeting reaffirmed their support of the check off increase with a unanimous vote of our delegates. Nebraska farmers are passionate and committed to furthering the resources and development of our states' largest industry and we ask that the Agriculture committee help with our vision to move our industry forward .

I would like to share an editorial recently published in the state's largest agriculture publication – the Nebraska Farmer. Editor Don McCabe does an excellent job of presenting the needs and goals our check off. As Mr. McCabe notes in his editorial, Nebraska is the lowest per bushel rate of any of the major corn producing states.

As President of NeCGA, I have had the opportunity to interact with a wide array of corn farmers from across Nebraska. I can tell you that I have not received a single negative response to the idea of raising our check off rate to a level that makes us competitive with our peers. The question I am usually asked by Nebraska corn farmers is "Why aren't we doing more?"

Members of Nebraska Corn Growers ask that the committee support and advance LB1057. As our predecessors before us paid forward, we ask that the tradition be continued, and we too, pay forward to insure the future of Nebraska's corn industry.

Thank you for your consideration.