



## James River Soil Conservation District

51 North First Street  
P.O. Box 190  
Ellendale, ND 584

December 15, 2025

SBARE  
NDSU Dept. 7520  
PO Box 6050  
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

Dear Members of SBARE,

The purpose of this letter is to respectfully request an increase in state support, currently \$1,361,520, to strengthen the Soil Conservation District (SCD) statewide workforce. This funding increase would specifically benefit Districts in smaller counties – where funding is limited but demand for District services is often most beneficial and requested.

Our district is in Dickey County, southeast North Dakota. Here, the James River SCD is known for its active education and community outreach programming, in addition to our normal activities of tree planting, conservation planning, and technical assistance to conserve our precious natural resources. Our biggest challenges come from the inability to provide competitive wages to secure stable employees to best complete our duties. This is due to not only to a smaller tax base available for mill levy dollars, but also because of other employers like the datacenter increasing the expected wage level in our area.

What makes SCD programming and services unique to other state and federal conservation agencies is that we can work locally with producers on a faster timetable. Often, after a producer request, within a day or two, we can have a plan of action in place which is different from other agencies. We also have community connections that foster a sense of unity when it comes to preserving the ND landscape and resources. By setting youth education as a priority in our workplans, our future generations of land owners become educated about the connections between agriculture and food sources. We are able to bridge the gap between a family living in a town to a family living on a cattle ranch.

We request SBARE prioritize this request for increased funding of North Dakota's Soil Conservation Districts in its upcoming recommendations. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to the people, agriculture, and natural resources of our state.

Sincerely,

James River SCD Board of Supervisors – Brad Sand, Keith Kronberg, Ryan Forward, Perry Bollum, and Gary Dathe



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