

**Testimony of Shannon Berndt
Northern Pulse Growers Association
House Bill 1009
Senate Appropriations Committee
Harvest Room
February 25, 2009**

Good morning Chairman Holmberg and members of the committee. For the record, my name is Shannon Berndt and I am the Executive Director for the Northern Pulse Growers Association. I am here today to provide support for HB1009 in particular as it relates to the FTE for phyto-sanitary issues.

The assistance of the plant industries division of the North Dakota Agriculture Department has been key to North Dakota pulse crop producers. North Dakota processors/exporters and the Northern Pulse Growers Association work with the North Dakota Department of Agriculture on issuing phyto-sanitary certificates and export certification which is critical to the export markets of North Dakota pulse crops. The pulse industry in recent years has seen an increase in acres and with that an increase in marketing opportunities. In 2008, more than 30 North Dakota facilities exported peas & lentils. A total of 632 phytos were issued for peas in 2007-2008 which is a 205% increase from 2005-2006. The increased workload from the pulse industry alone has increased the current staff's workload tremendously. The pulse industry's export markets are extremely important for the pulse industry, accounting for over 75% of our sales.

Chairman Holmberg and members of the committee, on behalf of the Northern Pulse Growers Association and pulse industry, I urged you to support the North Dakota Department of Agriculture budget in HB 1009 and the inclusion of a FTE to handle phyto-sanitary issues. Thank you.