



The mission of DRC is to promote sustainable use of natural resources and family-owned and operated agriculture by building enduring, democratic local groups that empower people to influence decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 11, 2017

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Tim Glaza, Organizer

tglaza@drcinfo.com

701.224.8587

Dakota Resource Council granted intervention to defend anti-corporate farming law, giving voice to North Dakotans

BISMARCK, ND – On Wednesday afternoon, Judge Daniel Hovland of the United States District Court in Bismarck granted Dakota Resource Council (DRC) the opportunity to intervene “as of right” to defend North Dakota’s anti-corporate farming law, joining the North Dakota Farmers Union, and the North Dakota Attorney General as co-defendants. Judge Hovland recognized that “much is at stake” in this case and that DRC’s involvement will help “sharpen the presentation of issues upon which the court so largely depends for illumination of difficult constitutional questions.” DRC is very pleased with the decision. DRC’s intent is to uphold the voice of North Dakotans, who voted overwhelmingly to reject corporate farming this June by a 3-1 margin.

“This case is about the soul of agriculture. Citizens are told that their long-held values are getting in the way of progress, or that the family farm is obsolete. But the truth is just the opposite – the family farm is our future,” said Sarah Vogel, DRC member and former North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner. “It is critical for groups like DRC to intervene because they help the people who live and work here to have a voice in these critical decisions about our future.”

The North Dakota Farm Bureau filed a lawsuit weeks before the statewide vote in June to repeal the entire anti-corporate farming law.

“In my view, the people spoke very clearly about the importance of keeping the anti-corporate farming law. Corporate farming will not strengthen our rural communities. We have an ideal system of family farm agriculture right here in North Dakota,” said Link Reinhiller, DRC member and a former board member of the Farm Bureau. “It’s the agriculture of the future, where food safety, food security, and good stewardship are a way of life.”

“In North Dakota, there’s a finite amount of land and resources for agricultural production. Moving production from independent farmers and ranchers to corporate control means that our finite resources go directly into the control of the corporations,” said Jeri Lynn Bakken, a DRC member and rancher in

Adams County. “Under the corporate structure, long-term productivity and stewardship of land and natural resources takes a backseat to shareholders’ profits.”

Governor Dalrymple signed the repeal of the corporate farming law in 2015, but it was referred by an alliance led by North Dakota Farmers Union, of which DRC was a key partner. Voters rejected corporate farming in all 53 counties and statewide 75% to 25% on June 14, 2016. The North Dakota Farm Bureau is leading the way to ignore the voters and 84 years of family farming history in the state by suing North Dakota, claiming that its anti-corporate farming law is unconstitutional, even though it has been held lawful repeatedly in the past.

Dakota Resource Council is represented by Baumstark Braaten, a law firm in Bismarck.

“This is a critical case regarding states’ rights, not only for North Dakota but for the country,” said attorney Derrick Braaten.

###

DAKOTA RESOURCE COUNCIL – SINCE 1978

www.drcinfo.org