

February 3, 2021

The Honorable Lou Ann Linehan
Chairwoman, Committee on Revenue
Nebraska State Senate
1445 K Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Senator Linehan:

On behalf of the more than 1,300 member companies of the Irrigation Association, I am writing today to notify you of our support for Legislative Bill 176. Nebraska's farmers provide the food, feed, fuel, and fiber that drives America. Not only is agriculture the backbone of Nebraska and America, but it also literally provides us the energy to be global leaders in every way. Through LB 176, Nebraska will have even more tools available to promote efficient irrigation, while driving innovation, increasing yield, and conserving water.

According to the USDA's 2018 Irrigation and Water Management Survey, 55.9 million acres of American agriculture is irrigated. More than 7.6 million of these acres are in Nebraska. With population increasing, more domestic and international pressures impacting our nation's farmers, and less resources (land, water, etc.) available for agricultural production, we need to strive for the greatest productivity possible from our agricultural land.

The mission of the Irrigation Association is to promote efficient irrigation. The most important tools we use for this are education and technology development and adoption. The future of farming lies in technologies developed and used right here in Nebraska. The U.S. is not only leading the charge with innovative and sustainable farming practices, we are developing the technologies that will maximize our water use, while increasing our yield.



The U.S. has been at the forefront of innovation and job creation for years. From the advent of the center pivot in 1940 to the implementation of drip-irrigation to the use of IoT and cloud-based technologies, the irrigation industry is providing farmers more tools to help them be successful in their business and conserving our precious natural resource, water, while doing so.

The Irrigation Association believes that efficient irrigation lies at the crossroads of innovation, workforce development, environmental conservation, and on-farm productivity. In fact, while many of the irrigation manufacturers are larger in size, many businesses involved in the trade and use of irrigation are rural small businesses. Without these businesses, our rural communities and agricultural operations would suffer tremendously. According to the USDA, in 2018 alone, more than \$1 billion was invested in hired labor dedicated to on-farm irrigation.

One of the major hurdles in investing in conservation enhancing technologies by farmers is access to capital. **Through LB 176, Nebraska will not only continue being a global leader in irrigation technology development, but also technology adoption by farmers. This leads to more jobs, increased conservation, and better productivity.**

We look forward to working with you and the committee as you address opportunities to advance innovation in our nation's agricultural sector. The members of the Irrigation Association are dedicated to efficient irrigation practices and technologies and look forward to providing this expertise as the committee continues to look at supporting on-farm technology opportunities.

If you have any questions, or you would like more information about the innovative efforts happening in irrigation in Nebraska or throughout the United States, please feel free to contact me at johnfarner@irrigation.org or 703.536.7080.

Sincerely,



John Farner
Industry Development Director

CC: Senator Brett Lindstrom