

How Infrastructure Investments Can Bolster North Dakota's Energy and Agriculture Economies: The US 85 Corridor

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U.S. Senate Budget Committee
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Mr. Chairman and Members of the U.S. Senate Budget Committee:

The MonDak region (eastern Montana and western North Dakota) has a 30 million acre land base. A dramatic growth in the MonDak agriculture production has resulted from the reduction of fallow acres due to conservation tillage systems and crop diversification with an increase of 2 million additional crop acres since 1990. The MonDak region is the number one producing area in the United States in durum wheat (2.5M acres), peas (776,000 acres) and lentils (250,000 acres) for export and domestic markets. The MonDak region is the last irrigation frontier in the United States and has the potential to develop up to 1 million new acres of irrigation agriculture to support expanded production/processing of value-added/high-value food and industrial products.

New large-scale agricultural processing industries are needed in the MonDak region to support irrigation and economic development and job creation through growth in irrigated agriculture. The investment in a 4-lane divided US 85 highway will be a key factor in attracting agricultural processing industries into the MonDak region and to allow us to fully capitalize and develop our water and land resources. The potential of the MonDak region to develop our natural resources will be greatly enhanced with the completion of the US 85 Corridor for safe, efficient transportation of our agricultural crops, livestock, and renewable energy products.