Chairman John Hoeven Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

Hearing to Review the FY2020 Budget Request for the Food and Drug Administration

March 28, 2019

(As prepared for delivery)

This hearing will come to order. Good afternoon. Today's hearing will focus on the Food and Drug Administration's fiscal year 2020 budget request. Thank you Commissioner Gottlieb for being here today to discuss FDA's priorities for the upcoming year. Thank you for your public service and your commitment to promote the health and safety of American consumers. I wish you well on your next endeavor, and I look forward to working with Dr. Sharpless, when he officially takes over as Acting Commissioner.

In every budget cycle, there are winners and losers. I think it's fair to say that once again FDA is one of the winners this time around. For FY 2020, the FDA's budget request for appropriated funds is a 5.5% increase over FY 2019. This is one of the highest percentage increases in all of the Department of Health and Human Services, especially when you factor in that for FY 2019, the Congress provided the FDA with a $268.6 million, or 9.6% increase.

This is an important conversation to have, because your agency impacts the lives of every American every day. The FDA has authority over approximately 20 cents of every dollar spent in America. Americans expect that the food they eat and the drugs they take will be safe and effective. The FDA's vast reach covers more than 300,000 foreign establishments and 185,000 domestic establishments, ranging from food processing plants to facilities that manufacture lifesaving medications. In addition to the facilities themselves, FDA is tasked with the regulatory responsibility for individual products.

In delivering these regulatory responsibilities, your private sector partners expect transparency and certainty from the FDA. When I speak to small business owners and agricultural producers in North Dakota, their overwhelming concern is that overly burdensome regulations coming out of Washington, D.C. often stifle innovation and hinder their ability to create jobs. While we all support FDA's mission, we must also be mindful of these concerns. I believe that the FDA must avoid the trappings of a "one-size-fits-all" approach to regulation, and I urge you and your staff to take a commonsense approach that supports our nation's innovators.

That being said, Dr. Gottlieb, I look forward to your testimony today, as well as my colleagues' questions. I will now turn it over to Senator Merkley for any opening remarks he would like to make.

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