

-----Original Message-----

From: Austin Gross [REDACTED]  
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2023 12:38 PM  
To: PUC <[PUCPF@state.sd.us](mailto:PUCPF@state.sd.us)>  
Subject: [EXT] Docket GW23-001 Banghart Properties LLC

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in regard to docket GW23-001 – In the Matter of PUC Staff’s Complaint Against Banghart Properties, LLC, Gettysburg, South Dakota.

My name is Austin Gross. I’m a producer in Sully County, South Dakota. I have frequently used Jeremy Frost to help market and sell my grain for roughly 10 years in his current capacity. I can honestly say that I have never once had a single business dealing with Mr. Frost where I didn’t feel adequately satisfied upon conclusion. Mr. Frost has consistently helped me achieve grain sales above local high bids time and time again. Mr. Frost has never been anything less than a consummate professional. Every contract I’ve ever entered into with Mr. Frost was carried out in a timely fashion, and to my satisfaction. I would consider Mr. Frost to be an invaluable asset to any producer that he works with. I would best categorize his character as selfless to a fault. Through diligent work, and by curating long mutually beneficial relationships, this man has single handedly whittled out higher prices for producers. He has essentially gone to battle with titans of the grain industry and outperformed them every step of the way. This kind of performance does not happen without making enemies.

In my opinion, Mr. Frost has had to endure undue pressure ever since he left CHS as a grain buyer. When a new buyer comes into a market and consistently acquires prices above the local, long established competitors, a couple of different things can happen. The local competitors can either buckle down and seek out these ancillary markets themselves to try and be able to offer the same or higher bids, or, they can simply try to ruin the new competitor’s reputation and hope that he goes away so they can go back to offering the same level of bids with the same level of margin that they’ve become accustomed to. The latter takes much less effort than the former.

As a lifelong South Dakota citizen, I'm proud to say that we take our freedom here very seriously. If you've ever sat through any legislative session, you know that our government is constantly concerned with the protecting of the citizens rights and freedoms. A free market system is one of the most important foundations of our society. We cannot have the government stepping in to intervene every time a new competitor shows up on our doorstep to shake up the status quo. Healthy competition is always good for the free market. Everyone has to up their game if they want to continue to play.

As I stated previously, these are all simply opinions of mine. What I can tell you with certainty, is that you will not continue to exist in the grain industry if you have not pleased both the buyer and seller when you facilitate these deals. Mr. Frost has shown his staying power time and time again. That should honestly tell you all you need to know about the legitimacy of Mr. Frost and his business. It is time to stop resisting Mr. Frost's methods and start embracing them.

Sincerely,  
Austin Gross



Blunt, SD 57522