

Introduced by

Senators Tomac, Andrist

1 A concurrent resolution urging the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the United
2 States Department of the Interior to budget for and make full entitlement payments under the
3 refuge revenue sharing program.

4 **WHEREAS**, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service manages 62 national wildlife
5 refuges in North Dakota; and

6 **WHEREAS**, North Dakota has more national wildlife refuges located within its borders
7 than does any other state; and

8 **WHEREAS**, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service owns and manages
9 approximately 210,000 acres of wildlife refuges in fee and 250,000 acres of waterfowl
10 production areas in fee in North Dakota; and

11 **WHEREAS**, North Dakota recognizes the value of these publicly owned lands as
12 wildlife habitat and for wildlife dependent recreation; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service refuge revenue sharing
14 program payments to counties have steadily decreased from 100 percent of entitlement in 1980
15 to approximately 66 percent of entitlement in 1998; and

16 **WHEREAS**, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service requested funding for a full
17 entitlement in 1998, but the amount of the entitlement was reduced by the Department of the
18 Interior; and

19 **WHEREAS**, the Congress of the United States has not budgeted for full entitlement of
20 the refuge revenue sharing program since 1980; and

21 **WHEREAS**, the deficit in refuge revenue sharing program payments represents a real
22 economic hardship to many counties and citizens in North Dakota; and

23 **WHEREAS**, the difference between full entitlement and actual payments made to
24 counties in North Dakota for 1998 was approximately \$224,000; and

1 **WHEREAS**, local concerns over the deficit in refuge revenue sharing program
2 payments creates opposition to United States Fish and Wildlife Service land acquisition, land
3 management activities, and other Fish and Wildlife Service programs; and

4 **WHEREAS**, state agencies such as the North Dakota Game and Fish Department and
5 organizations such as the North Dakota Wetlands Trust and the Nature Conservancy, which
6 pay actual taxes on the lands they own or manage, suffer criticism of and opposition to their
7 programs as the result of concerns over the refuge revenue sharing program deficit; and

8 **WHEREAS**, it would be in the best interests of wildlife conservation, county
9 government, local entities, landowners, and outdoor recreationists if the United States Fish and
10 Wildlife Service made full refuge revenue sharing program payments;

11 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF NORTH DAKOTA,**
12 **THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:**

13 That the Fifty-sixth Legislative Assembly urges the United States Fish and Wildlife
14 Service and the United States Department of the Interior to budget for and make full entitlement
15 payments under the refuge revenue sharing program; and

16 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the North Dakota Legislative Assembly urges the
17 North Dakota Congressional Delegation to seek and support appropriations providing full
18 entitlement payments for the refuge revenue sharing program; and

19 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Secretary of State forward copies of this
20 resolution to the director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Secretary of the
21 Interior, and to each member of the North Dakota Congressional Delegation.