

Chairman Porter, Vice Chairman Anderson, and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1414 to allow nonresidents originally from North Dakota the opportunity to return home to hunt. Hunting is one of the great privileges and traditions that is almost universally loved by our citizens, and it should be inclusive to all people who grew up here. The intent of this bill is to reunite families in the field and preserve and enhance our hunting traditions.

I myself made the difficult decision to leave as a young man to pursue opportunities outside of the state. The current nonresident fee structure made it impossible for me to spend a day in the field when I came back to visit my family. This I suspect is the case for many, especially young adults. I made the decision to return to North Dakota and raise my family here. When my children grow up, if they decide to move elsewhere, I want them to be able to come home to hunt with me. I want all of North Dakota's sons and daughters to be able to come home to hunt.

The state of our tradition is in peril. Habitat is vanishing, which any hunter knows means the game is over. How do we fix this, how do we enrich this heritage? By looking forward, by enabling younger hunters to get hooked, to care about the state of hunting here whether they currently live here or not. Hunting is traditional and intertwined with families in our state. Let's bring those families back together.

My inspiration for this bill is a program that has been implemented next door in Montana. Similar laws also exist in other states such as Maine. This is very doable in North Dakota, and the revenue generated could be used by the department to gain access to more public land for all hunters in our state to utilize.