

To: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

RE: In Opposition of Senate Bill No. 2368

The North Dakota Bowhunters Association opposes the intended actions of this bill. Our hunting, fishing, trapping and other outdoor opportunities, the citizens of North Dakota enjoy, are best left to those who are trained experts in these respective fields.

In North Dakota, we are not very aware of the pressure provided by the anti and non-hunting community. States, where legislative commissions govern outdoor opportunities, are increasingly being attacked by these non-hunting groups. Initiating the same sort of outdoor commission here in our state of North Dakota would only be opening the door to these groups. Maybe not right away, but most certainly in the future.

The following points of interest are borrowed from an article written by the Congressional Sportsman's Foundation. ([Anti-Hunters Pushing for Seats on Game Commissions | Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation](#))

Points of Interest

- In January of 2016, a pro-hunting California Fish and Game Commissioner turned in his resignation over frustration of non-consumptive obstruction from other Commissioners. In multiple instances, partisan politics has been the driver of commission regulation and not sound science, which sets a dangerous precedent.
- The addition of anti-sportsmen and women onto game commissions represents a dangerous shift in values, from conservation to preservation.
- In 2018, an Idaho Commissioner resigned following criticism and controversy after sharing pictures from an African safari hunting trip.
- In Oregon in 2019, a retired marine, rancher, and hunting guide was appointed by the Governor to serve on the Commission but was later rejected by the Senate following criticism by environmentalist groups for big game hunting photos on social media.
- In 2020 and 2021, New Hampshire saw legislative efforts to amend the qualifications that potential members of the Fish and Game Commission must meet, which would ultimately afford recreational clubs and non-consumptive organizations seats at the table.
- In 2021 and 2022, legislators in Missouri (**MO HJR 55**), Nebraska (**NE L 615**), and Vermont (**VT H 400**) introduced legislation intending to alter the composition and/or nomination process for commissions.
- The 2022 spring black bear season in Washington was canceled after the Fish and Wildlife Commission failed to pass the necessary regulations for the season, resulting in one Commissioner resigning from his post due to the uproar this caused. The composition of the Commission at the time included numerous obstructionists who would rather see an end to the season than the implementation of science-based wildlife management.

Our North Dakota Game and Fish Department is led by a Governor appointed Director. Our Governor also approves the proclamation which provides the current guidelines for our outdoor opportunities. The North Dakota Bowhunters Association believes this to be a reliable practice and will oppose actions as presented in SB 2368.

Sincerely,

Darrell Belisle

NDBA Government and Conservation Director