

To: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

RE: Testimony in Opposition of Senate Bill No. 2368

I want to express my opposition to SB 2368 and the intended actions of this bill. In North Dakota, we have not yet experienced 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.

The purpose of North Dakota Game & Fish is to conserve wildlife through regulations and sustainable hunting. The NDG&F is understandably staffed by experts in the wildlife management field: mostly hunters, anglers, and trappers. Utilizing their extensive knowledge of the outdoors, these professionals have been able to make responsible, informed, and effective decisions regarding fishing and wildlife conservation. In recent years, however, people who do not hunt, fish, or trap, and in some cases are fundamentally opposed to these practices, have pushed for representation on game commissions.

The new pressure for non-consumptive constituents to be on game commission's poses an alarming problem that directly threatens the future of conservation. Sportsmen and women contribute an incredible amount to conservation efforts through the purchasing of hunting licenses, permits, tags, stamps, and other outdoor related gear, in addition to other contributions from habitat organizations. Having commissioners that are neutral on the matter or even directly oppose hunting, trapping, and fishing leads to obstruction, which can restrict access and opportunity for sportsmen and women. If opportunities to hunt are reduced, it follows that sportsmen's and women's ability to contribute to conservation efforts will dramatically decrease, putting conservation efforts for both game and non-game species at risk.

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. The composition of a Commission could potentially include numerous obstructionists who would rather see an end to hunting, fishing, and trapping seasons than the implementation of science-based wildlife management.

Please vote 'NO' on SB 2368. 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, and that would be our current ND Game & Fish department as it stands today.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimonial on this bill.

Respectfully,

*Steve Goroski*