

2025 69th Legislative Assembly

House Bill 1554

Ref: Relating to the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board

Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee

March 6th, 2025

Chairman Patten, members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee, for the record my name is Rhonda Kelsch, North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts – Executive Director. I also serve as a non-voting Technical Committee Member since 2013 to the ND Outdoor Heritage Fund.

I was a part of the development team that helped shape the application process along with providing partnership and programmatic information required by the governing body. With the longstanding knowledge of this program in a technical capacity our association is supportive of the changes proposed in House Bill (HB) 1554.

As a technical committee member, we see a wide range of applications that require input on water related components that need further clarification. Many of the applications submitted include dam and watershed restoration, streambank stabilization, and flood plain mitigation. With the additional representation from the North Dakota Department of Water Resources, it will allow us to provide accurate, timely, and correct programmatic guidelines to the voting advisory board members of the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

The integrity of the Outdoor Heritage Fund is the top priority to all members involved during the granting process. We want to ensure all applications meet the technical requirements of both state and federal programs; while meeting the directives for funding approval. Throughout the grant rounds, we have seen an increased demand for water related projects and the proposed changes to the Century Code would align for a more solid technical representation.

We also support funding consideration of an application moving forward based on the majority of board members present which would represent a quorum.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in favor of HB 1554 and ask for your continued support.

Respectfully,

Rhonda Kelsch

NDASCD Executive Director

3310 University Drive

Bismarck, ND 58552

Outdoor Heritage Fund – Technical Advisor