



House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Testimony on HB 1074

North Dakota Game and Fish Department
Scott Winkelman, Chief Game Warden
January 15, 2021

Chairman Porter, Vice Chairman Damschen and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Scott Winkelman, Chief Game Warden of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. I am testifying today in support of HB 1074.

HB 1074 amends and reenacts a section of law regarding the records kept and reports made by the Chief Game Warden. Current law requires the Chief Game Warden to keep a complete and correct record, in a book provided for that purpose, of all that person's transactions and the name of each person violating the game and fish laws, the date of that person's arrest, the amount of the fine and costs imposed upon and paid by each person, and the name of the judge before whom that person appeared. Requiring all this information to be kept in a book involves increased time and money expended on searching for and printing documents and a duplication of effort as all of these records are currently kept electronically in addition to the required physical book. These hard copies also take up a tremendous amount of storage space and are difficult to search when fulfilling Freedom of Information Act requests. Current law requires the Chief Game Warden to make a full report to the Director within thirty days after the end of each fiscal year. Requiring the report to be done on the fiscal year as opposed to the calendar year is confusing to the public.

If passed this would provide the Chief Game Warden the ability to eliminate the physical book of records, keep the same records in a format authorized by the Director and require the yearly report to be completed on the calendar year. Storing and maintaining these records in an electronic format only would decrease the amount of time, money and storage space spent on keeping them as hard copies in a book. It would also make the records easily searchable and more available to the public. Also, the yearly report will be clear and transparent for the Director and the public.

The Department respectfully requests a DO PASS on HB 1074.