



NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

TESTIMONY OF JOHN BRADLEY NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION SENATE BILL 2144 HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE MARCH 11TH, 2021

Chairman Porter, members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

For the record, I am John Bradley, Executive Director of the North Dakota Wildlife Federation. I am here today representing our 1,500 members in 15 affiliated wildlife and sportsmen's club across North Dakota. While I do not speak for the 100,000 plus hunters, that took to the field this past year, I would say our views are representative of many of them. I would also note that our membership is made up of landowners, trappers, anglers, hikers, birders, wildlife photographers, and other recreationists.

NDWF recognizes the hard work and discussions that have gone into the two bills in front of you this morning. We applaud the work of the Interim Access Committee on their work on e-posting. NDWF supports trying to find a solution to the historic fighting over the posting/trespass issue that has gone on in past legislative sessions and we were active participants in the interim process. We support the concept of electronic posting and reducing both the cost and workload for landowners to annually post their land. Our members want better landowner-hunter relations, and we believe e-posting along with the continuation of physical signs are good steps to achieving that goal. We have also heard from landowners who are happy that they do not have to participate with electronic posting if this bill passes. They want to leave their land unposted and do not want to participate in either physical or electronic posting. Under SB 2144 they get exactly that.

The other key components that we support in SB 2144 are the landowner or operator's name being required on the physical sign. The second component is the exemption for hunters and anglers on fenced land and the definition for fenced land that was developed among the various groups. SB2144 provides added protection for criminal trespass for landowners/operators on fenced land. And while I don't think anyone actually thinks passing a law is going to make dishonest people all of a sudden turn honest. Hopefully, this bill will help the state attorney's ability to prosecute criminal trespass cases.

We encourage this committee to also pass SB 2036 to continue to study and address other access issues facing the state and to troubleshoot any issues regarding e-posting. Having a dedicated committee to sit down with a variety of interests has proven a successful way of moving this issue towards a resolution.

I will stand for any questions that the committee may have. Thank you.