

January 16, 2023

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Wade Williamson and I live in the rural Parshall, ND area.

I am in support of HB 1151 because I truly think that CWD is being used by the North Dakota Game & Fish Department as a means of pushing their personal agenda against the baiting of deer.

I am 70 years old and have been a hunter, land owner and conservationist for all of my life. I own about 4,000 acres of really good wildlife property and I usually spend in excess of \$20,000 a year planting food plots, developing habitat and feeding wildlife through the winters. I usually have 200-350 deer and over 1,000 pheasants plus all kinds of other wildlife right out my living room window. From breeding season through the winter until spring whitetail deer are very gregarious and "yard up." Until we can figure out how to change this natural phenomenon close contact of deer is not going to change.

Every year I have first-time bow hunters on my land and I realize the importance of having deer available to hunt. I am more fortunate than most people, but it is very hard to hunt whitetails in the prairie areas without bait. By using bait, I have found how important it is to have time and position for a successful harvest. We have lost a lot less deer while hunting over bait.

When the No Baiting/Feeding bill was defeated approximately 4-5 sessions ago I saw the North Dakota Game & Fish Department start to take a back door piece meal approach to the issue. Initially, banning baiting in mule deer units where CWD had been found and then on public and state land. After that they added adjoining units. I did not like what they were doing but until it affected what I did on my own property I did not verbally oppose it... now I most certainly do!!!

While visiting with a biologist this summer we started talking about CWD and baiting. His comment to me was that they did not know if baiting had an effect on CWD but if it "blew up" they did not want egg on their face... basically CYA!

I would like you to know that the North Dakota Game & Fish Department is not always right! I also don't think that they are totally aware of what is going on outside of Bismarck and are very slow to react to changes. Through the winters of 2008-2010 approximately 75% of the deer herd in our area starved to death but the North Dakota Game & Fish Department continued to sell excess doe tags for several years after that. I am not totally unhappy with the North Dakota Game & Fish Department, as there are a lot of good employees there. But, I do believe the baiting ban is being pushed by a select few using CWD as a reason. Please support HB 1151. Thank you for your time. If you have any questions for me my cell number is 701-898-0054.