



Attn: House Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
Re: House Bill 1377 – Party Hunting
Date: February 8, 2023
Position: Oppose

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Energy & Natural Resources,

I write you today on behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation in opposition to House Bill 1377. Allowing party hunting in North Dakota would potentially increase the already-limited draw pool in that it would likely increase deer harvest, which in turn would require the Game and Fish Department to reduce the number of deer tags available to be drawn. I respectfully urge the members of this Committee to oppose the passage of this bill.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

The language of this bill is vague and does not define what constitutes a hunting party or who qualifies as a participating member of a party. Without these clear definitions, this law would be virtually impossible to enforce. Additionally, this bill would have significant consequences on the existing draw system. Allowing party hunting in North Dakota, which only issues deer tags through a lottery system, would allow a single hunter to recruit nine friends to apply for tags which that single hunter would intend to fill. Dramatically increasing the number of draw applicants makes it less likely for North Dakotan sportsmen and women to successfully receive a tag, discouraging hunters, and detracting from participation of a time-honored state tradition.

State fish and wildlife management agencies are the entities best equipped to make science-based wildlife management decisions. By statutorily authorizing this activity, House Bill 1377 usurps the management authority of the Game and Fish Department's professional biologists and their ability to adaptively manage species (including hunting practices related thereto) using the best available, and at times rapidly changing, science.

Your Inside Connection to Outdoor Legislation

In light of the above considerations, I respectfully urge the members of this Committee to oppose the passage of House Bill 1377. I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter and welcome any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Robert Matthews

Senior Coordinator, Upper Midwestern States

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

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