

RE: HB 1151

Dear Energy and Natural Resource Committee,

This letter is to express my support for HB 1151.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony in support of bill 1151.

I just wanted to take a moment to express my opinion and support for being able to bait big game for the purpose of hunting in North Dakota. I am an avid hunter and outdoorsman, I have 4 children that enjoy the outdoors as much as myself. When baiting restrictions were put into place in my area of northern ND a few years back, my children started to lose their interest in bowhunting. They were accustomed to going out and sitting in the blind or stand and seeing a wide variety of wildlife coming into the small 5-10 gallon bait pile that I would place out for the purpose of hunting. The squirrels, pheasants, rabbits, and numerous other types of wildlife would provide entertainment and help sustain interest in the outdoors for my kids as they wait for a deer to possibly come in. Unfortunately, now I have 2 children that have very little interest in bowhunting as it is boring to them without the wildlife activity that they were used to seeing at the bait pile. We all know we live in a world of expected instant gratification as anything our young hunters need to know is at the touch of a button. Hunting over bait provided this need our youth desired. If we do not assist in keeping our youth interested in hunting and enjoying the outdoors, what does the future of hunting look like? If we lose our future generations of hunters, the issues our game and fish will need to address and mitigate will trump the current unproven CWD risk that the banning of baiting is attempting to resolve 10 times.

Building our youth hunters interest in North Dakota's outdoors and hunting heritage along with increasing the odds of a clean/ethical shot at harvesting big game are just a couple benefits that hunting over bait provide. In my honest opinion, just these few benefits greatly outweigh the unproven science and the "possibility" that banning hunting big game over bait in North Dakota will slow the spread of CWD. CWD has been around for 100's of years. Our deer herd will continue to flourish and thrive for 100's more even with a bucket of corn on the ground.

CWD is real and it is in our deer herd. My personal opinion is that it has always been in our herd. We started a small scale testing program in the 1990's. We have since increased the amount of deer tested, the more you test, the more you will find. Still to this day in North Dakota, there is only 1 deer that possibly can be labeled with the cause of death associated with CWD. I understand and realize our G&F cannot just sit on their hands and hope that the CWD disease does not become a real concern in ND. This is why the sampling and testing program needs to continue and data needs to continue to be compiled and analyzed. The G&F needs funding to research and assist in developing a cure for CWD. This cure could be administered in the form of a type of bait or deer attractant. Banning baiting of big game for the purpose of hunting will do absolutely nothing to slow or prevent the spread of CWD. I strongly support this bill for giving the ND hunters this right back and for the ND G&F to look outside the box and put some real effort into finding solutions and preventive measures that will actually make a difference in the spread of CWD IF solutions or preventive measures are ever needed.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Handeland
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