



ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK FOUNDATION

March 17, 2023

TO: ND Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

FR: Ryan Bronson, Director of Government Affairs

RE: Support for HB1260 Private land habitat support and landowner elk depredation

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) mission is to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife, their habitat and our hunting heritage. We represent more than 225,000 members nationwide and 4,000 in North Dakota. Since 1991 RMEF has completed 267 conservation and hunting heritage projects in the state, enhancing over 59,422 acres and improved access to 36,317 acres.

RMEF values its relationship with private landowners and the wildlife benefits that they provide. The Game and Fish Department's authority to enter formal habitat agreements with willing landowners will be a valuable tool to stem the loss of wildlife habitat in the state.

The elk depredation proposal in the bill is a practical way to utilize hunters to help address depredation problems. We support the agency's prioritization of utilizing license purchasing hunters rather than paying government employees. We are hopeful that this proposal, once enacted, will reduce the problems landowners are experiencing and will improve the tolerance they have for North Dakota's elk herd.