

Testimony in support of: North Dakota House Bill 1538-A Bill for an Act to amend and reenact subsection 20 of section 20.1-02-05 of the North Dakota Century Code

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Submitted by: Zach Axtman
20 Country Rd Rugby ND 58368

To: Senator Patten and Members of the North Dakota House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

As an avid angler and outdoorsman, I am writing to voice my support for your House Bill 1538.

Many people go to college to become credible in their line of work. Fishing is a little different as that I know of there are no colleges that offer a fishing degree. Where do most anglers gain the credibility? By fishing tournaments. This allows them to gain the recognition to be industry leaders. In my own personal experience, this has given me the platform to educate not only adults but children. By doing this we are helping the longevity of the fishing community.

This bill takes the pass-through dollar away. It allows the communities that bring in these tournaments the ability to keep the money they would have had to pay in conservation fees and use it toward projects they feel the need for in their fishing community. Most of the time these communities are the ones that are paying the conservation fee for the circuits to come to ND. By allowing these communities to allocate the money how they feel best suits their needs, not only does this allow them to pick their own projects but it also helps alleviate the financial burden on Game and Fish to make sure the money is collected and passed out correctly.

Communities that bring in these tournaments are conservation minded. They know what kind of resource they have and what it means to their community. One example of this was Devils Lake implementing the requirement of an ANS inspection before anglers are allowed to start fishing when they arrive. No one told them they needed to do this. They did this on their own to help stop the spread of aquatic nuisance species and help protect their resource.

The best part of this is the same clubs that were getting the conservation fees would have the opportunity to work with the cities, charities, and tournaments to gain that money back. In saving these entities money, there will be more money to go around and go around faster.

Bottom line is if this bill does not pass and/or something is not changed the big national tournaments will continue to stay away from North Dakota. This will not only cost North Dakota residents the opportunity to use the platform to bring attention to our state, but also get the recognition for having some of the best fisheries around.

Thank you for your consideration on HBI538 and I hope you vote PASS on this bill.

Zach Axtman