



House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Testimony on HB 1236

North Dakota Game and Fish Department
Casey Anderson, Chief Wildlife Division
January 24, 2025

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Casey Anderson, and I serve as the Wildlife Division Chief for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (Department). I am here today to testify in opposition to HB 1236.

The mission of the Department is to protect, conserve, and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for sustained consumptive and nonconsumptive use. This bill seeks to limit our ability to do that by essentially forcing the Department to ignore a wildlife disease that, when present, does negatively affect deer, elk, and moose in the state. Understanding and managing wildlife diseases is just as important as population counts in understanding a population's health and sustainability for public use. There are a couple facts about Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) that I want us all to realize when considering this bill. CWD is a fatal disease within the deer family. CWD is a relatively new disease to wildlife management. This bill would eliminate the Department's ability to manage this disease in any way or even to have conversations about the disease. Putting these kinds of restrictions on the Department's ability to understand population health of any species only reduces our ability to manage North Dakota's wildlife for the benefit of its citizens. For these reasons the Department asks the committee for a do not pass recommendation on HB 1236.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.