

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Testimony on HB 1470

Chairman Porter, Vice Chairs Anderson and Novak, and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Warren Swenson, I reside in District 7 here in Bismarck, and I am testifying today in **support of HB 1470**.

For background, I have been a member of wildlife conservation organizations for the last 15 years, I am an avid sportsman chasing fins, feathers, and fur across this great state. I grew up on a farm in Oliver County where we implement conservation programs, some with the help of the ND Game and Fish Department, and show new and old, residents and non-resident, hunters alike, the bountiful game that we have come to take for granted.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has been creating exceptional habitat and access opportunities, countless surveys and studies, and enforcing the ever-changing laws in North Dakota. This has become ever more difficult and expensive in the last decade, yet the prices of the sportsman's licenses have not changed. The last time our legislation increased the prices of hunting and fishing licenses was in 2013. According to the North Dakota Trust Lands Department, from 2014 to 2024, average county rental rates have increased 39% for pastureland in Burleigh County, 21% in Mercer County, and a 23% increase in Morton County. Cropland rental rates have increased 25% in Burleigh County, 24% in Mercer County, and a 10% increase in Morton County. Because of this, it has become increasingly more expensive to bring in new landowners willing to sign up for the PLOTS program. I bring this to your attention because we, as sportsmen and women, have been expecting the ND Game and Fish Department to deliver the same quality PLOTS land with no increase in license costs for both residents and non-residents.

The ND Game and Fish Department protects our waters, with an increase in boat registration fees, the department can continue to defend our waters from aquatic nuisance species (ANS).

I pose this question to the committee, do you think you could live the same life today, with the income you had in 2013? This bill will serve to provide the citizens of North Dakota with more opportunities to chase fins, fur, and feathers on quality, publicly accessible land and water.

It is time for the hunters and fishermen of North Dakota to step up and give the department a boost, so they can continue to deliver their mission: *to protect, conserve, and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitat for sustained public consumptive and nonconsumptive use.*

I believe that fair license fee increases for both our resident and nonresident sportsmen and women are good for North Dakota. I urge a **do pass recommendation on HB 1470**. Thank you for your time and I will stand for any questions.

Warren Swenson

District 7

Bismarck, ND