



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS
NORTH DAKOTA**

**TESTIMONY OF BROCK WAHL
NORTH DAKOTA BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS
HOUSE BILL 1470
HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCE COMMITTEE
February 6, 2025**

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

The North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers supports House Bill 1470 and requests a Do Pass recommendation from the committee.

With the current inflationary environment and the core message from the recent Habitat and Hunting Access Summit, these license increases are not only expected, they are needed. We are happy to testify in support of increased funding for our wildlife habitat and access programs, and the department that implements those programs and acts as trustee of our public wildlife assets. In a similar vein, North Dakota Sportsmen need more hunting access. We believe it is imperative that the department has the financial ability to improve and expand access programs across the state to serve a variety of outdoor pursuits. For the previous biennium, over 25 million dollars was spent on the PLOTS program, which should send a clear message that access for sportsmen isn't cheap.

Our only question with House Bill 1470 is, is it enough? North Dakota wildlife has suffered incredible habitat losses totaling in the millions of acres through reductions in CRP, conversion of native prairie, draining of wetlands, and the removal of tree rows. Some of those habitats were supported by programs that had over a hundred million dollars in annual funding. While these license increases are a step in the right direction, they won't be able to compete with that type of funding.

Considered by many to be the father of modern conservation, Aldo Leopold was once quoted saying, "*Conservation will ultimately boil down to rewarding the private landowner who conserves the public interest.*"

We think passing this legislation will only help North Dakota's ability to fund and expand habitat and access programs, and reward landowners who conserve the public interest.

We encourage a Do Pass recommendation from the committee.

Brock Wahl
Chairman
North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

