

SB 2137

North Dakota House Energy and Natural Resource Committee

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Darrell Belisle and I am from Turtle Lake, ND. I am writing to you on my own behalf as a lifelong North Dakota Sportsman and Bowhunter. I shot my first arrows in the 1960's, harvested my first deer, with those arrows, in the 1970's and have enjoyed a successful life as a Bowhunter ever since those early years, a long time ago.

The language of SB 2137, "The Baiting Bill", seems to contain 3 areas of interest. These concerns are Chronic Wasting disease, Private Property Rights, and the use of Supplemental Feed. I'll try to offer my opinion and a follow up suggestion with the below.

Chronic Wasting Disease

This topic seems to be the main concern of the bill. It concerns whether or not the North Dakota Game and Fish Dept. has any validity in their efforts concerning the management of Wildlife diseases.

- ***Is Chronic Wasting Disease real?***
 - Yes, it is very real and well documented throughout our country and the world.
- ***Is Chronic wasting Disease a threat to the future of hunting In North Dakota?***
 - I believe it could certainly be a threat to the hunting opportunities of our future generations.
- ***Is the Game and Fish Dept. effectively managing this wildlife disease?***
 - I believe they are using the best practices available. It is always better to be proactive and work to control a wildlife disease rather than let a problem grow until it is far beyond control.

Private Property Rights

- Are the practices of wildlife disease management an issue which should concern North Dakota private property rights?
 - No, I certainly respect North Dakota private property rights, however I do not believe the management of a wildlife disease is an issue concerning private property rights.

Supplemental feed

Supplemental feed is the main issue in this bill. How does placing supplemental feed concern wildlife disease management practices? When can I hunt over bait?

- ***What is the problem with hunting big game over bait in North Dakota?***
 - I believe in the management practice of controlling the “human component” of gathering big game to a close contact situation. In nature, there are many situations we cannot control, but we can control those things we create ourselves.
- ***I can place supplemental feed year around, I just can't hunt over it.***
 - This is a valid point. Control on the placement of supplemental feed certainly needs to be addressed.

In Summary

Do we simply ignore the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's approach to managing a wildlife disease and just take a wait and see approach? Do we ignore wildlife disease management with the cloak of private property rights?

The early years of my Bowhunting life are long gone. Those opportunities can never be recreated. But we can look out for those hunters 30, 40, 50 years from now. Maybe our own grandchildren. We need to find workable solutions which will benefit our future generations.

We shouldn't undermine the Game and Fish Departments experts and their management plans. We should not threaten the future of big game hunting with private property right issues. However, I would encourage you to resolve the issue of supplemental feed. Using supplemental feed to attract and gather big game animals is something that could and should be addressed.

I would encourage you to oppose SB 2137

Sincerely,

Darrell Belisle

Turtle Lake, ND