

03/04/2025

Dear Energy and Natural Resources Committee members,

I am writing to you today to show my support for SB 2137.

A similar bill was one of the largest topics of debate in the 68th legislative assembly under House Bill 1151. This previous bill passed the house with overwhelming support from constituents (approximately 80% testimonial support) and a majority of the members of the House Of Representatives. It also had a “do pass” recommendation coming out of committee on the Senate side, but failed on the floor due to sudden political pressures from outside of the legislative branch.

Please be diligently mindful of constituents' responses during this legislative session. SB 2137's intent is strongly supported throughout the outdoor community and hunting over feed is a practice that is widely accepted and/or utilized by the majority of hunters here in North Dakota. The “science” that the Game and Fish and opponents of this bill will try to tout as a viable reason to dismiss SB2137 is not concrete, nor is it proven to be effective in mitigating CWD transmission and control. In-fact, it is quite contrary as the recommended methods/strategies for disease control have been proven to fail in many other states where similar CWD protocols have been enacted; in-fact look no further than CWD data here within our own state in unit 3F2, where many restrictions (including eliminating hunting over feed) have been put in place for well over a decade, but yet positive tests continue to climb annually in this unit. Interestingly enough, the positive test are also mostly attributed to mule deer, which in most cases hardly ever relate or pattern to hunter placed feed and seldom visit feed sites.

There simply is no reason to implement a hunting restriction (such as banning the ability to hunt over feed) when there is no definitive evidence that supports that the practice of feeding wildlife, and ESPECIALLY hunting game over feed has had a detrimental impact to the herd. Even our own Game and Fish department, responsible for managing the health of our deer herd has hypocritically, (but strategically) disregarded their own policies and criteria for implementing baiting restrictions in several units in the face of a so-called “epidemic” in order to not rouse more sportsmen who would support SB 2137 during this legislative session.

I hope you are encouraged through this testimony to support SB2137, to help preserve a useful tool that allows hunters the ability to pursue their quarry in a way that they choose to, without restriction, one that utilizes a practice that has been accepted and applied by hunters since the dawn of time.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matt Williams". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned at the bottom left of the page.

Matt Williamson  
Minot, ND