



NATIONAL DEER ASSOCIATION

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North Dakota House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
600 E. Blvd Ave,
Bismark, ND 58505

Dear Members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the National Deer Association (NDA) to express our opposition to Senate Bill 2137 (SB 2137). This bill, if enacted, would severely undermine wildlife management in North Dakota by stripping the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDFWD) of its authority to regulate supplemental feeding and baiting, two essential tools in controlling chronic wasting disease (CWD) and maintaining the health of the state's deer herds.

We believe SB 2137 represents a direct threat to effective wildlife management in North Dakota. CWD is a deadly disease that has already impacted deer populations across the nation, and its spread continues to be a growing concern. The NDFWD's ability to regulate supplemental feeding and baiting is a critical tool in mitigating CWD's spread. These practices can increase the concentration of wildlife in certain areas, which in turn increases the risk of disease transmission, especially CWD. Allowing for uncontrolled supplemental feeding and baiting could make North Dakota's deer population more vulnerable to the disease, putting both wildlife health and future hunting opportunities at risk.

By removing the NDFWD's authority to regulate these practices, SB 2137 would essentially eliminate scientifically grounded, evidence-based management strategies that are crucial for protecting North Dakota's deer herds. The NDFWD, as experts in wildlife management, are in the best position to determine how best to manage these practices in a way that prevents the spread of CWD. Taking away this authority jeopardizes the department's ability to take timely and necessary actions to safeguard the health of the state's wildlife.

Furthermore, the NDA believes that the scientific community and wildlife management professionals, including the NDFWD, must be trusted to make decisions that are grounded in research, data, and an understanding of the complex dynamics of wildlife health. SB 2137 undermines this expertise by allowing political interference in a matter that requires a nuanced and scientifically informed approach.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose SB 2137. The future of North Dakota's wildlife depends on the ability of experts like the NDFWD to manage these critical issues effectively. Removing their authority would be a step backward in protecting both our deer populations and the future of hunting in North Dakota.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to protecting the state's natural resources, and we ask for your support in ensuring that science-based management of CWD and other wildlife concerns remains a priority in North Dakota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Appling Pooler".

Catherine Appling-Pooler
Director of Policy
National Deer Association