

Support of SB 2137

Chairman Porter and Members of House Energy and Natural Resource Committee my name is Chris Jorde. I am a lifelong North Dakota Farmer/Rancher, Landowner, Sportsman, and Wildlife Service Business Owner from Towner. I am asking for a "Do Pass" on SB 2137 for the following information. I first became involved back 2009 when the Legislature took up a bill that wanted to ban the feeding of wildlife in ND. I remember testifying in front of this same committee; some of which members today with familiar names and faces were also present. That bill was a very well attended and gathered a large amount of testimony from both sides of the topic. At the end of the bill, "We The People" spoke loud and clear and the bill passed which continued the feeding of all wildlife in ND. Shortly after the outcome of this bill I developed a business plan and grew a successful business (Heart J Outfitters) in which I offered my hunting services as well as access to land that I farmed and ranched on. My business took off because of good planning as well as the ability to harvest and feed the wildlife that were being pursued. Many sportsman from all across the country made their way to get a taste of what the great ND wildlife had to offer them. Many of these sportsmen spent money for the higher non-resident fees and were happy to support the ND economy. I did a very good job of promoting ND as a tourism destination and even worked with the ND State Tourism Department to attract business at out-of-state hunting shows. The business was very successful for many years because of the services that I offered and the appreciation I showed to them visiting and spending money in our state until 2021. In 2021 the hunting unit that I conduct business in had a hunting restriction put on it for the reason of being in close proximity of a CWD detection. This inability to no longer hunt over feed that I could place for the wildlife that the 2009 Legislature protected caused my business that I had successfully operated for many years plummet! Sportsman no longer wanted to come to ND that had previously had the ability get close to the wildlife and make ethical archery shots consistently! My business took an 84% drop in bookings because of this restriction! Talk about a substantial financial hit to me but also a hit to the ND economy! So I ask all of you today; Do economics and revenue to the State of North Dakota matter to you? I think they do and I still promote the State of ND tourism and try to attract business to my business that allows me to spend my dollars in our local communities large and small to survive! I would hope that you would consider what this hunting restriction has done to my business as well as the ND economy!

For these reasons I would appreciate a "DO PASS" on SB 2137!

I will stand for any questions. Thank you for your time and ability to share my personal story with you!

Christopher Jorde – Heart J Outfitters, Towner ND