

# House Energy and Natural Resources Public Hearing

## Testimony on SB 2137

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Members of the North Dakota House of Legislature, my name is Matthew Maldonado. I am voicing my opposition to Senate Bill 2137 that would remove authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF) to restrict hunting over supplemental feed. The bill would take away one of their tools to manage disease in the state and could have massive ramifications on more than just hunters.

My love for the environment started when I was growing up, fishing and hiking with my grandfather any chance I had. I did not begin hunting until I was older, but after my first hunting trip I was hooked. Hunting and fishing trips with my friends and family represent some of my favorite memories looking back. I am aware, however, that many of these trips would not be possible without tireless work by the state game and fish departments. NDGF's dedication to protecting, conserving, and enhancing wildlife populations is what allows hunters to experience the same great memories I was lucky enough to have. Removing the ability of NDGF to actively manage wildlife populations could have lasting consequences on both wildlife and jeopardize our valued hunting culture in North Dakota well into the future.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) represents one of the largest threats to white-tailed and mule deer populations in North America. The disease is 100% fatal, passes primarily through contact, and can even survive in the soil for several years after being shed by the individual. There is currently no cure for CWD, meaning if the number of infected deer in North Dakota continues to increase, there could be massive losses in deer populations. Is this what hunters want? Decreased hunter participation is already a concern at the national level. Is approving actions that directly decrease the deer population in North Dakota the best way to increase hunter participation? Even from an economic perspective, arguing that NDGF cannot ban baiting, and therefore manage the spread of CWD, could cause massive losses in the economic value of hunting in North Dakota. Arguing that NDGF cannot actively protect, enhance, and conserve deer populations in North Dakota will only lead to decreased deer populations, decreased hunter participation, decreased economic value, and could result in future hunters being unable to enjoy the formative experiences I had.

I ask that you to vote no on Senate Bill 2137 to allow NDGF to follow their mission of protect, conserve, and improve deer populations so that deer populations remain healthy for future public recreational opportunity.

Thanks for your time,



Matthew Maldonado