

Testimony in OPPOSITION of SB2137 – Relating to prohibiting the use of supplemental feed for hunting
Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 2137 of the 69th legislative assembly. This bill would strip authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish to implement their CWD Management Plan by prohibiting the Game and Fish from banning baiting practices. Just like the 2023 baiting bill (HB1151) I view this as ballot box biology.

I personally have a huge problem with legislation or ballot initiatives that seek to restrict or control the ability of the wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties. Duties that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations, and as stated in Article XI, Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution, *“Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be **forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good.**”*

This bill would effectively undo over 15 years of management by the North Dakota Game and Fish to slow the spread of CWD. Since the first CWD positive deer was found in 2009, the department has spent 6 million dollars on 500 hay yard projects for landowners, to help keep animals from congregating on silage piles, hay yards, and other alternative food sources.

Research in Saskatchewan, Michigan, and Mississippi has found that man placed food sources represent by far, the largest aggregation of cervids and leads to the most focal contact with their environment. In other words, there is no activity that congregates deer more, putting them in direct contact with other deer and potentially contaminated environments, than artificial food sources. More than natural winter herding, natural food sources, bedding, and even breeding behaviors.

I understand that baiting bans alone will not stop CWD, that deer do naturally congregate, and some of those natural occurrences will never be a variable managers can control in wild animals. But I also believe it is disingenuous to suggest that hundreds of bait piles and feeders on the landscape, being replenished repeatedly throughout the year, does not directly exacerbate the spread of CWD.

I urge you to strongly oppose SB 2137.

Thank you,

Steve Goroski

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