

Opposition to Senate Bill 2137

SB2137 would severely handicap the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's ability to manage deer populations and deer hunting procedures with the best available science. The proposed Bill removes authority from the ND Game and Fish Department to issue rules or adopt a policy or practice prohibiting the supplemental feeding on private property for hunting of big game animals. The Bill is a direct attempt to undermine chronic wasting disease (CWD) management efforts in the state and will have a detrimental impact on managing other diseases such as bovine tuberculosis that would impact the state's livestock industry as well.

CWD is a fatal neurological disease affecting cervids like deer, elk, and moose. It has been shown to significantly reduce deer populations in affected areas, as it always leads to death in infected individuals. The disease disrupts population dynamics and could cause long-term ecological consequences if left unchecked. CWD is a major threat to the deer population in North Dakota and should not be taken lightly.

The ND Game and Fish Department has personnel equipped with specialized knowledge, experience, and resources necessary to monitor and manage CWD effectively. This agency has the expertise to conduct surveillance and research, and to control measures tailored to local conditions and ecosystems, which is all vital for containing the spread of the disease.

Deer populations can be infected with bovine tuberculosis which can move from deer to cattle. Effective state-led wildlife disease management helps minimize these risks by implementing targeted surveillance, controlling deer populations in high-risk areas, and coordinating with agricultural agencies to protect livestock and local economies.

I respectfully ask you for a DO NOT PASS on SB2137