

I am writing in regards to SB 2137. I am opposed to this bill and offer the following reasons for this opposition. First as a long time hunter in North Dakota in excess of 55 years, I have always respected and relied on the North Dakota Game and Fish (G&F) to manage and protect our fish and wildlife resource. I believe they have the personnel and expertise to effectively manage our fish and wildlife and they have not proved me wrong in 65 years. To hamstring this agency by restricting them in their ability to regulate and control wildlife diseases is unconscionable and grossly misguided.

I will also speak to this proposed legislation as a landowner. I do not believe I own the wildlife on my land, and am a strong proponent of the North American Model of Wildlife Management which states that wildlife is held in trust for the people of the state of North Dakota. As a landowner, I cannot do anything I want on my property. I cannot drain water onto my neighbors land, I cannot ignore and fail to spray noxious weeds which potentially spread to neighbors property, I cannot construct a facility which pollutes or destroys the environment and pollutes groundwater or surface water. In the same way I should not be allowed to bait deer when it will have negative impacts to the free ranging wildlife we all own. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is real and is one of the greatest threats to our deer herd in this country. The G&F only restricts baiting in units with CWD or adjacent units within a predetermined proximity to the CWD positive. We cannot stop natural congregation of deer or even interaction of deer. However we do have the means to control unnatural congregation of deer due to baiting. This is a reasonable and effective approach to controlling CWD. North Dakota currently has low prevalence of this disease and the reason for this low prevalence rate is the proactive approach G&F has taken to control this disease.

I am asking you to please oppose SB 2137 and keep the Game and Fish Department in charge of all aspects of wildlife management. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.