

## House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

### Opposing Testimony on SB 2137

Robert M. Illg

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Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Robert M. Illg. I am a lifelong sportsman, bowhunter, and resident of Bismarck, North Dakota.

As a sportsman, my success is not measured by how many trophies I have on the wall or how much meat is in my freezer each fall. It is, however, measured by the legacy I leave behind for my kids and future generations. I write today so I can say in the future how proud I am to be measured by how many lives I have touched and the impact I have had on wildlife, and most importantly, that I have done my part to have a positive impact.

I was a bit conflicted about writing today. As a non-native to North Dakota, I bring a different perspective. Hunting public land in this state and many other states across our nation, I have yet to need to bait a big game animal. This bill will not decrease participation in hunting and certainly doesn't expand opportunity; if anything, it limits opportunity. If everyone holding a tag is successful, fewer tags are given out, and if people are instantly successful, participation drops as well. We could all use a bit more patience, something learned in the field.

To consider crippling the Game and Fish Department by removing this management option is not based on science but rather emotion. Adding an expiration date to the bill does nothing but cause confusion and reopen the debate after much damage has been done to both the resource and the agency.

I know it's not a popular stance to go against baiting or supplemental feeding, but supporting anything that threatens the future of our resources is incomprehensible.

This is not a CWD exists or doesn't exist issue; it's a baiting bill.

Is CWD the propaganda flavor of the year, possibly the decade?

In an age of so much information and disinformation available, who or what source should we trust? The supporters of this bill, who are out there every day and see it firsthand, who also claim the disease doesn't exist? Remember, CWD has only been in ND since 2009, so they have 14 years of experience with a small handful of animals.

How about a professional wildlife veterinarian and an agency tasked with managing wildlife, utilizing peer-supported biology? They have spent an exorbitant amount of time studying wildlife diseases and dedicated entire careers to managing wildlife.

The low prevalence of CWD that the Game and Fish Department has successfully maintained is quite possibly a hindrance to opening people's eyes about CWD. Unfortunately, if the disease increases, there is no turning back.

Nobody leaves a compromise 100% satisfied, but they should be able to live with the results. Cervids cannot live with CWD. Sportsmen can live without hunting over bait.

Thank you for your consideration.

I respectfully ask you for a DO NOT PASS on SB2137.