

01/10//2025

Written testimony in support of SB 2137

Dear Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

I am writing to you today to show my support for SB 2137 which would not allow the department to adopt a rule or implement policy that would prohibit or restrict the use of supplemental feed on private property for hunting a big game animal.

A similar bill was one of the largest topics of debate in the 68th legislative assembly under House Bill 1151. This previous bill passed the house with overwhelming support from constituents (approximately 80% testimonial support) and a majority of the members of the House Of Representatives. It also had a “do pass” recommendation coming out of committee on the Senate side, but failed on the floor due to sudden political pressures from outside of the legislative branch.

Please be diligently mindful of constituents' responses during this legislative session. SB 2137's intent is strongly supported throughout the outdoor community and hunting over feed is a practice that is widely accepted and/or utilized by the majority of hunters here in North Dakota. The “science” that the Game and Fish and opponents of this bill will try to tout as a viable reason to dismiss SB2137 is not concrete, nor is it proven to be effective in mitigating CWD transmission and control. In-fact, it is quite contrary as the recommended methods/strategies for disease control have been proven to fail in many other states where similar CWD protocols have been enacted. There simply is no reason to implement a hunting restriction (such as banning the ability to hunt over feed) when there is no definitive evidence that supports that the practice of feeding wildlife, and ESPECIALLY hunting game over feed has had a detrimental impact to the herd. Even our own Game and Fish department, responsible for managing the health of our deer herd has hypocritically, (but strategically) disregarded their own policies and criteria for implementing baiting restrictions in several units in the face of a so-called “epidemic”.

I hope you are encouraged through this testimony to support SB2137, to help preserve a useful tool that allows hunters the ability to pursue their quarry in a way that they choose to, without restriction, one that utilizes a practice that has been accepted and applied by hunters since the dawn of time.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matt Williamson". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Matt Williamson
Minot, ND