

Chairman Luick, Senate Ag Committee Members my name is Jamie Thompson a nineteen year old college student from Antler ND. My comments today are on SB 2137.

From the moment I picked up my first bow at our local archery club, I knew this sport would be a lifelong passion. It was not just about hitting a target—it was about discipline, respect, and the deep connection it fosters with nature. Over the years, bow hunting became a cherished tradition in my family, one that brought us closer together and taught us invaluable lessons about patience, responsibility, and the beauty of the natural world.

Bow hunting is not just a hobby, it is a way of life. It is a practice rooted in respect for wildlife and the land. However, it is also a pursuit that requires significant time, effort, and skill. For someone like me, who juggled a demanding highschool schedule filled with classes, sports, and involvement in multiple organizations, finding the time to sit in the field with my bow was a challenge. Most days, I left my house at 8:00 a.m. and did not return till 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. Despite my love for bow hunting, the time I could dedicate to it was limited. Now, as a college student three hours away from home and only able to return home two days a week, finding time to bow hunt has become even more difficult. Baiting allows me to make the most of those precious hours, giving me the best chance to fill my archery tag responsibility and ethically.

Baiting is a tool—a means to position deer for a clean, ethical shot. As a proficient archer, I know the importance of making every shot count. Bow hunting is not about luck or recklessness; it is about precision and respect for the animal. A well-placed shot ensures a quick, humane harvest, preventing unnecessary suffering. Baiting helps achieve this by drawing deer into a controlled environment where I can take a shot at a known yardage, one I have practiced countless times.

Without baiting, hunters often face unpredictable circumstances. Deer may appear at odd angles or distances, increasing the likelihood of a poor shot. For someone with limited time—whether it is a busy high school schedule or a college student who can only hunt on weekends—baiting reduces these variables and ensures that every opportunity in the field is a responsible one.

Bow hunting is about more than harvesting a deer. It is about the memories made along the way—the quiet moments in the stand, the laughter shared with family, and the profound sense of peace that comes from being immersed in nature. Some of my fondest memories are sitting in the stand with my dad, playing a few good games of rummy while we waited for a deer to appear, or giggling with a friend even though we knew we were supposed to stay quiet. These moments remind me that bow hunting is not just a sport; it is a bond that ties us to each other and to the land.

I will never forget the pride in my dad's voice when I made a clean shot on a buck and he said "Nice shot, kid, you got him," followed by a fist bump. Or the excitement in my brothers' voices when they heard the news: "Your sister got her buck." These moments are etched into my heart, and they are a testament to the joy and connection that bow hunting brings to families.

Bow hunting also provides a rare opportunity to connect with nature on a profound level. Sitting in the stand, you notice things you might otherwise overlook—the way the wind dances through the trees, the songs of birds as they flit about, and the quiet grace of a deer as it moves through the field. These moments remind us of the beauty and fragility of the world around us, teaching us to appreciate and protect it.

Baiting plays a role in this connection. By drawing deer into a specific area, it allows hunters to observe them up close, to study their behaviors and movements. This deepens our respect for the animals we hunt and reinforces the importance of ethical practices.

For me, baiting is not about taking shortcuts; it is about making the most of the time I have while ensuring that every shot is ethical and humane. As a high school student with a packed schedule, I did not have the luxury of spending hours upon hours in the field. Now, as a college student living three hours away from home and spending five out of the seven days on campus, my time to hunt is even more limited. Baiting allows me to hunt responsibly, giving me the best chance to succeed without compromising the principles of bow hunting. It is a tool that helps level the playing field for hunters like me, who are committed to doing things the right way but face significant time constraints.

Bow hunting is a tradition that goes far beyond the act of harvesting a deer. It is about family, memories, and deep connection to nature. It is about responsibility, respect, and the lessons we pass down to future generations. Baiting is an essential tool that helps hunters uphold these values, ensuring that every shot is ethical and every hunt is meaningful.

Allowing baiting in bow hunting is not just a matter of convenience; it is a matter of ethics, responsibility, and preserving a tradition that means too much to so many. Let us ensure that the future generations can experience the same joy, connection, and life lessons that bow hunting has given me.

In closing, I urge you to vote in favor of SB 2137.

Thank you, Jamie Thompson