

**01/16/2025**

**Written Testimony in Support of SB 2137**

**Dear Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee Members,**

My name is Nicholas Kavli, and I am a lifelong outdoorsman and a proud father of two children. I primarily hunt on a family farm in the Turtle Mountains. Today, I write to you in strong support of SB 2137.

As someone deeply invested in wildlife health and the future of outdoor activities in North Dakota, I believe the current restrictions on baiting have unintentionally caused more harm than good. These restrictions not only impact the health and behavior of wildlife but also strain the relationship between hunters, landowners, and the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF).

I understand and respect the concerns about Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), but I believe that prohibiting baiting is counterproductive. Let me highlight my reasoning, guided by the best available science and my personal experiences as a hunter and landowner.

The *AFWA Technical Report on Best Management Practices for Prevention, Surveillance, and Management of Chronic Wasting Disease*—a document referenced by NDGF—addresses baiting as a factor in CWD management. Notably, the report concludes the section on baiting with this statement:

"In preventing, managing or controlling CWD, states should consider the socio-economic consequences of prohibitions on baiting and feeding."

This recommendation underscores the importance of balancing wildlife health with social and economic realities. It acknowledges that the "human element"—the involvement and cooperation of hunters and landowners—is critical to effective wildlife management.

On my family farm, the baiting ban has significantly altered our hunting practices. In the past, we used small, regulated bait piles to keep deer on our land after crops were harvested. Without baiting, the deer migrate to areas with illegal bait piles or to those with the resources to maintain food plots. This creates an unintended concentration of deer, which undermines the very goal of reducing disease transmission.

Moreover, the baiting ban has eroded trust and cooperation between hunters and NDGF. Hunters are less likely to participate in essential activities like responding to surveys or submitting harvested deer for testing. NDGF's recent policy, allowing baiting if 10% of tags in a unit are submitted for testing, has only seen one unit meet this requirement—a clear indicator that hunters are disengaged.

By supporting SB 2137, you have the opportunity to restore balance and foster a better relationship between hunters, landowners, and NDGF. This legislation acknowledges the socio-economic impacts of baiting restrictions while addressing wildlife health concerns.

Thank you for considering my perspective and for all you do to ensure North Dakota remains a great place for hunting and outdoor recreation.

Sincerely,  
Nicholas Kavli