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THEODORE ROOSEVELT

BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB

January 16, 2025

Sen. Larry Luick, Chair
North Dakota Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee
600 E Boulevard Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58505

Re: Boone & Crockett Club Opposition to SB 2137

Dear Sen. Luick,

The Boone and Crockett Club writes in opposition to SB 2137 and respectfully requests that you vote "No" when this bill comes to a vote in your committee.

Wildlife management decisions in North Dakota, particularly those decisions aimed at addressing the spread of disease, should be guided by the best available science. We believe the North Dakota Game and Fish Department is best equipped to make those decisions. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a contagious and 100% fatal disease that threatens the long-term health, sustainability, and resilience of North Dakota's wild deer populations. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that infectious prions associated with CWD can persist in man-placed mineral licks, soil, feeders, and baiting sites, facilitating horizontal and environmental transmission among animals with prolonged and repeated contact with these materials.

This legislation would undermine the ability of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department to effectively fulfill its mission to "protect, conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitat for sustained public consumptive and non-consumptive use." The Department acts as trustee of North Dakota's big game resources and has demonstrated its commitment to addressing conservation challenges, including the use of baiting restrictions in areas where disease transmission risks are highest. SB 2137 attempts to strip the Department's authority over baiting regulations and is counterproductive to over 15 years of CWD management efforts.

It is imperative that the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, the agency specifically established by this legislature to protect the state's fish and wildlife resources, retain its authority to regulate baiting in the face of chronic wasting disease. Preserving this authority is critical to ensuring the health and resilience of North Dakota's wildlife.

We respectfully request you oppose SB 2137.

Sincerely,

Tony Schoonen, CEO
Boone and Crockett Club