

2025 SB 2137 Testimony

Authored by: Tim Sandstrom

Dear Committee,

I strongly support SB 2137 and respectfully ask you to vote **DO PASS** on this bill.

Two years ago, I submitted similar testimony supporting HB 1151, which aimed to create a compromise between ethics, the irony of wildlife feeding versus hunting over food sources, and perceived science. Unfortunately, instead of fostering collaboration, a bait-and-switch occurred when some elected legislators voted to kill good-faith efforts.

I understand the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's (NDGF) concerns regarding chronic wasting disease (CWD). The debate about managing CWD continues among game and fish departments, landowners, and hunters nationwide. To this day, there appears to be no definitive solution.

For me, it all comes down to **perception**.

According to the *Fargo InForum*, NDGF Wildlife Chief Casey Anderson stated:

"Baiting causes deer to concentrate more closely than they do naturally in winter. Baiting during hunting season increases the duration of that concentration."

He further explained:

"Disease is spread by urine, saliva, and feces. It's more likely to be spread when they're pulled together in times of year when they normally aren't."

Mr. Anderson's perception is that hunters using bait are more likely to spread disease compared to natural deer congregation.

However, here's an example from my experience:

In 2023, while preparing my testimony for HB 1151, we experienced a particularly tough winter. On my daily drive home, I passed five alfalfa bales. Four bales sat abandoned in an alfalfa field, unused for hay. The fifth bale was purposefully placed in a neighbor's yard to help wildlife survive the winter.

For two months, I observed multiple deer feeding and bedding on these bales, with groups of 20 or more gathering at both the "abandoned" and "purposefully placed" locations.

Using Mr. Anderson's logic, the deer feeding at the four "naturally" abandoned bales posed no elevated risk. Yet, the single bale placed by my neighbor would, according to NDGF's perception, be "more likely" to spread disease.

This inconsistency is hard to reconcile. Additionally, NDGF has no rules, nor is there any legislated law, prohibiting people from feeding wildlife outside the context of hunting.

As you consider recommending the passage of SB 2137, I encourage you to ask: **Who is being more reasonable in these scenarios?** My example is real, and I'm certain you've witnessed or heard of countless similar situations.

I acknowledge that diseases like CWD have impacts, and they can and will spread. However, to single out hunters and landowners for punishment based on perceived risk is unfair—especially when we see far more deer deaths caused by motor vehicles or diseases like Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) than by CWD. And it's not even close.

I respectfully urge you to recommend passage of SB 2137.

Best regards,
Tim Sandstrom

Source – Fargo Inforum: [Bill would stop officials from banning deer baiting in North Dakota](#)