

My name is Erik Burke. I am a third generation North Dakotan, husband of a hunter, and father of three hopeful future hunters. I am an avid outdoorsman and casual but hopeful conservationist. I am writing this testimony in support of SB 2137.

My family owns approximately 90 acres of mixed pasture and hay ground in Grand Forks County. As a result, to legally hunt deer on my property I must either draw a firearm permit from the lottery system or hunt with archery equipment. I believe that this is a fair system.

After the passing of my father nearly all of our property is dedicated to wild game. We have spent considerable time and resources improving habitat and food for wildlife on our property. Given our location in eastern North Dakota this is primarily beneficial to white tailed deer.

I have used supplemental feed for attracting deer to my hunting grounds when legal. I have also not taken a deer in three years due to the dismally low deer population. Many of my friends and family have also not taken a deer in recent years. They are basing their decisions from what they have seen firsthand from their pickup window, tractor seat, or hunting blind. Based on every bit of research I have seen, CWD in no way has contributed to the decline of the deer population. Hunting near a small food source should not take the blame over loss of habitat, climate, and predators.

If we are interested in continuing hunting as a North Dakota tradition, we need to preserve the rights of hunters. We also need to protect the rights of landowners who have the best interest of wild game in mind. I want my children to continue the tradition. I want them to be stewards of the land and wildlife. I want them engaged and I want to give them every opportunity to have a successful hunting experience while keeping conservation in mind. What I am saying is I want them to see wildlife while sitting in a hunting blind or stand. This is why I support SB 2137.