

Dear legislators;

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of bill SB 2216.

Back in the 1970s there were over 40,000 resident waterfowl hunters and approximately 5,000 nonresidents. In 2024 there were approximately 16,000 resident waterfowl hunters and approximately 30,000 nonresidents. I say approximately 16,000 resident waterfowl hunters because we currently have no way to measure us.

The fastest growing sport in North Dakota is the shooting sports. Our youth are having an incredibly difficult time translating their shooting skills to the field. The reasons are multifactorial. North Dakotas waterfowl habitat continues to shrink. Secondly our residents are simply getting outcompeted. There are almost 2 nonresidents for every resident waterfowl hunter. Hunting land is being purchased and leased by out of state interests at an alarming rate. For example, over 20,000 acres of prime waterfowl hunting land have been purchased in McLean county alone over the last few years. Also some of our youth lack mentors to take them.

A resident waterfowl license would serve several purposes. Monies generated would be used to provide desperately needed youth hunting opportunities. Secondly funds would be used to restore our constantly shrinking waterfowl habitat within the state. A third benefit would be to provide the North Dakota Game and Fish with a mechanism to determine definitively how many resident waterfowl hunters there are in the state.

Thank you for considering my testimony. Please let me know if I can provide any more information.

Sincerely,

Joseph W Carlson