

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Testimony on SB 2216

Chairman Patten, Vice Chairman Kessel, and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Warren Swenson. I am a concerned sportsman from Bismarck, and I am testifying today in **opposition of SB 2216**.

SB 2216 stands today to create and enact a new section of North Dakota Century Code, chapter 20.1-03, creating a “waterfowl habitat improvement fund”. It will be funded by a “waterfowl habitat restoration stamp” which, as the bill reads today, has been unfairly placed on the backs of resident hunters.

Committee members, let me be clear, I am absolutely in favor of extra funding for waterfowl habitat improvements and youth hunting programs. I have been an active member of conservation organizations for over 15 years, and I stand here today because of the love I gained for the outdoors because of the youth hunting programs I attended. I have been influenced by these programs and conservation organizations so much that I pursued a career in Natural Resources and Rangeland Ecology. I have dedicated my entire working and volunteering career to fundraising and educating around wildlife conservation.

I am testifying in opposition today because this bill could be much more effective. ND Game and Fish has released a fiscal note proposing that this bill will generate approximately \$264,000 each biennium for this fund. I do not believe that our resident small game license purchasers should be the only group to pay into this fund. For example, I am an avid waterfowl hunter myself, but I purchase the resident combination license yearly and as the bill stands today, I would not be required to purchase a stamp. If we included resident combination and non-resident license purchases, this fund could generate over 2 million dollars per biennium. I have included my own fiscal breakdown below using data directly from North Dakota Game and Fish Department’s website.

ND Game and Fish Licenses	Sold in 2022	Sold in 2023	Potential Funds Generated per Biennium
Resident Small Game	12,724	13,203	\$259,270
Resident Combination	63,801	61,228	\$1,250,290
Non-Resident Waterfowl	23,062	26,337	\$493,990
Non-Resident Small Game	21,209	25,985	\$471,940
Total			\$2,475,490

Lastly, I believe that this committee should be concerned about how, when, and where this money will be spent. There needs to be checks and balances built into this bill. I believe that the spirit of this bill has potential, but many adjustments need to be made.

In conclusion, I urge a recommendation of **do not pass** as this bill stands today. Thank you for your time and I will stand for any questions.

Warren Swenson

Bismarck, ND

District 7