

SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Testimony in favor of SB 2216

Chairman Patten and members of the Committee:

My name is Nick Surma, and I am a resident of Lincoln, North Dakota. I have been an avid waterfowl hunter since my dad introduced me to the sport when I was 10 years old. North Dakota offers some of the best waterfowl hunting opportunities in North America. However, North Dakota's waterfowl habitat, and more generally waterfowl habitat across the prairie pothole region, has been consistently declining for several decades, reducing waterfowl hunting access and jeopardizing the longevity of premier waterfowl hunting in North Dakota. Senate Bill 2216 offers much needed funding to support conservation efforts for the preservation of North Dakota's wetlands and native prairies, which not only benefit waterfowl, but upland birds and big game as well.

Although I support additional funding for waterfowl habitat conservation efforts, I do not believe residents should be the only ones bearing this burden. North Dakota has seen an extraordinary increase in nonresident waterfowl hunting pressure over the past 10-20 years. This has led to greater hunting competition for residents, while at the same time reducing hunting access. If nonresident waterfowl hunters are coming to North Dakota solely for the purpose of taking advantage of the State's waterfowl habitat and hunting opportunities, nonresidents should also be obligated to purchase the \$10 stamp this bill is proposing. Therefore, I support the proposed amendment to the Bill and would encourage a do pass as amended recommendation. Thank you for considering my testimony and your efforts on SB 2216.