

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ENGROSSED SENATE CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION NO. 4029**

Page 1, line 1, after "resolution" replace the remainder of the resolution with "urging the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the United States Department of the Interior to budget for and make full entitlement payments under the refuge revenue sharing program.

WHEREAS, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service manages 62 national wildlife refuges in North Dakota; and

WHEREAS, North Dakota has more national wildlife refuges located within its borders than does any other state; and

WHEREAS, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service owns and manages approximately 210,000 acres of wildlife refuges in fee and 250,000 acres of waterfowl production areas in fee in North Dakota; and

WHEREAS, North Dakota recognizes the value of these publicly owned lands as wildlife habitat and for wildlife dependent recreation; and

WHEREAS, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service refuge revenue sharing program payments to counties have steadily decreased from 100 percent of entitlement in 1980 to approximately 66 percent of entitlement in 1998; and

WHEREAS, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service requested funding for a full entitlement in 1998, but the amount of the entitlement was reduced by the Department of the Interior; and

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States has not budgeted for full entitlement of the refuge revenue sharing program since 1980; and

WHEREAS, the deficit in refuge revenue sharing program payments represents a real economic hardship to many counties and citizens in North Dakota; and

WHEREAS, the difference between full entitlement and actual payments made to counties in North Dakota for 1998 was approximately \$224,000; and

WHEREAS, local concerns over the deficit in refuge revenue sharing program payments creates opposition to United States Fish and Wildlife Service land acquisition, land management activities, and other Fish and Wildlife Service programs; and

WHEREAS, state agencies such as the North Dakota Game and Fish Department and organizations such as the North Dakota Wetlands Trust and the Nature Conservancy, which pay actual taxes on the lands they own or manage, suffer criticism of and opposition to their programs as the result of concerns over the refuge revenue sharing program deficit; and

WHEREAS, it would be in the best interests of wildlife conservation, county government, local entities, landowners, and outdoor recreationists if the United States Fish and Wildlife Service made full refuge revenue sharing program payments;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF NORTH
DAKOTA, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:**

That the Fifty-sixth Legislative Assembly urges the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the United States Department of the Interior to budget for and make full entitlement payments under the refuge revenue sharing program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the North Dakota Legislative Assembly urges the North Dakota Congressional Delegation to seek and support appropriations providing full entitlement payments for the refuge revenue sharing program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State forward copies of this resolution to the director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Secretary of the Interior, and to each member of the North Dakota Congressional Delegation."

Renumber accordingly