

Testimony of North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society
HB 1009
8 March, 2021
Elizabeth Loos, #342

Dear Chairman Holmberg and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

I represent the ND Chapter of The Wildlife Society (NDCTWS), which is comprised of professionals, students, and laypersons active in wildlife research, management, education and administration. HB 1009, the Agriculture Commissioners budget was amended to include a \$200,000 appropriation from the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) for defraying the expenses of the soil health cover crop grant program. We strongly oppose this amendment, and urge its removal.

The OHF was designed to provide grants to state agencies, tribal governments, political subdivisions and nonprofit organizations. Grant applications are ranked and reviewed by the OHF Advisory Board, which then makes funding recommendations to the ND Industrial Commission. State, local and tribal agencies form partnerships and pool funds to deliver conservation programs to farmers and ranchers throughout the state. This has been a successful model for 17 grant cycles, with groups competing for the use of OHF dollars. The ND Department of Agriculture could, and should, use the process to compete for the \$200,000 appropriated in HB 1009 for its soil health cover crop grant program. Using OHF funds to directly fund state agency budgets was never part of the development of the very successful OHF, and no such precedent should be set in this bill.

We urge you to remove this amendment (Section 6, page, 3, lines 22-25).

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Loos
ND Chapter of The Wildlife Society