

SB 2093:
North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department
Senate Government and Veterans Affairs
Room 216, 10.45 AM
Friday, January 8, 2021

Good morning Chairman Vedaa, members of the committee, my name is Ryan Gardner, West Regional Manager for the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department. I am testifying on behalf of the Department in support of SB 2093.

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD) vision is to enrich generations through experiences that connect people to places. We wish to pursue changes to section 55-08-05, specifically subsections 6 and 7, to allow NDPRD to better meet our local communities' requests, visitors needs and align with national trends.

The NDPRD oversees a total of 15 destination properties. Across these locations, the agency has 16 rental meeting spaces and dozens of outdoor gathering locations such as picnic shelters, amphitheaters, and acres of open green space. Driven by the need for rental space amongst many of our rural communities and our locations' inherent beauty, NDPRD continues to grow as a popular venue for weddings and other community events.

Currently, subsections 6 and 7 of century code 55-08-05 allow for the limited sales of alcohol by concessionaires on Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park's premises and the three properties NDPRD has located on United States Army Corps of Engineers land around Lake Sakakawea. These include Lake Sakakawea State Park, Fort Stevenson State Park, and Lewis and Clark State Park. These four locations makeup a quarter of our destination properties and mainly only service the communities located along the Highway 83 corridor.

As it stands now, visitors can bring their own alcoholic beverages onto NDPRD properties for consumption, given they follow all current state and local laws. Neither the individual nor the agency can bring in a vendor to provide such a service at this time at sites not described in subsections 6 and 7. This results in lost opportunities for local partnerships, local businesses, customer experiences, and Department revenues.

The proposed changes to subsections 6 and 7 creates equity and operational consistencies throughout the Department's portfolio. NDPRD can respond to the changing demand from our visitors and our nearby communities by allowing the appropriate concessionaires the opportunity to provide a service during events held by the public, the agency, and the community.

Therefore, the Department supports SB2093. Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to stand for questions.