

March 12, 2021

Dear Chairman Kreun and members of Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee,

The undersigned organizations represent a diverse spectrum of interest groups spanning agriculture, energy, the business community and conservation, yet share a common interest in the continued success of the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Additionally, a number of these groups were the original thought leaders who came together to create the original vision and worked with legislators to craft legislation from which the Outdoor Heritage Fund was born.

We are writing today to express our concerns regarding HB 1215 which would direct portions of the Outdoor Heritage Fund to the Bank of North Dakota to provide for a loan program. While we believe that the intentions of HB 1215 are certainly sound, we do not perceive utility in having a loan program.

There have been a great many productive outcomes associated with the Outdoor Heritage Fund, spanning conservation projects on working farms and ranches, projects occurring in our communities to support a variety of recreational activities all across the state and in our communities. We are eager to ensure the sustained success of the Fund. While we don't believe HB 1215, in its current form, is the vehicle to an improved Outdoor Heritage Fund, we do believe we are at an opportune moment to check progress on the Fund and evaluate necessary legislative changes to meet current or envisioned needs.

To that end, we suggest the bill be amended into an Interim Study Resolution and be passed by the Committee to reconvene the many stakeholder groups to ensure a bright future for the Fund. We sincerely appreciate your consideration of our perspective.

Thank you all for your commitment to our state's natural resources, its outdoor heritage, and the beauty and economy of our common landscape with opportunities for both enjoyment and utility. We look forward to working with you in ensuring a future for it all.

Respectfully yours,

ND Farmers Union
ND Grain Growers
ND Natural Resources Trust
ND Petroleum Council
ND Recreation & Park Association
ND Stockmen's Association
ND Wildlife Federation
ND Chapter of the Wildlife Society
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Greater North Dakota Chamber
Lignite Energy Council