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**Testimony in support of:** North Dakota House Bill 1538-A Bill for an Act to amend and reenact subsection 20 of section 20.1-02-05 of the North Dakota Century Code

**Date:** January 30, 2023

**Submitted by:** Patrick Neu, President of the National Professional Anglers Association

**To:** Representative Porter and Members of the North Dakota House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

As President of the National Professional Anglers Association (NPAA), a 1400-member national organization comprised of tournament anglers, student anglers, guides, charter captains and angler educators, with 85 Members from North Dakota, I am writing to voice our organizations support for your House Bill 1538.

The NPAA and its Members are passionate about angling and boating, and most have taken their passion for these pursuits to the level where they are classified as professional anglers and as such they have become influencers in their communities. As influencers many feel it's their duty to become involved in matters that can affect the future of the sport they love and live to participate in. That is exactly the case regarding Bill 1538.

Our Members and their networks have been affected greatly by the current legislation that is in place surrounding tournaments and fees that have been mandated to be charged to tournament organizations. Those fees in the current legislation have affected the number of tournament events that are being run in North Dakota by both in state and out of state organizations. The number of major tournament events have dropped because of the excessive fees being charged tournament organizations under the current legislation. The reduction in these tournaments affects the tourism dollars brought into the local communities in which the events are held and in the case of non-profit organizations it has also limited their abilities to utilize fishing tournaments as a source of revenue for their organizations.

The overall affect that the current legislation has had on the number of events being held in the state is an obvious effect of the current legislation. A not so obvious effect is the reduction in the exposure to the sport and the resource that these tournament fees have created. The NPAA has organized and supported angler education events that are hosted at the weigh-ins associated with tournaments in North Dakota for years. Without those tournaments and the opportunity that existed to have NPAA Members share their knowledge and passion for angling with the crowd/audience/youth and family attendees at these events, the number of the angling education events we have supported has also dropped. The result, an unintended consequence of the current legislation, will likely have an effect on angling recruitment and participation in your state.

It is for these reasons that the NPAA and our North Dakota Members overwhelmingly support Bill 1538. This Bill revising the language in the current legislation is of significant importance to the local communities in which these events are held and to the future of the sport that means so much to the residents of North Dakota and our Members. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Allen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "A".

NPAA, President