

Get Involved, Tell Your Story North Dakota House Bill 1538

As American citizens it is our responsibility to respectfully participate in the political process. A small group of business owners, civil servants, professional anglers, nonprofit supporters, recreational sportsmen and North Dakota residents have taken the time to study the history of the current North Dakota Century Code, all of the groups that are positively and negatively affected by the current Century Code and how to fix the unintended consequences of the current Century Code that is in place.

Now is the time for you to share your story of how the current North Dakota Century Code has impacted you personally, the businesses you support, the people or organizations that you love and because you're passionate about the positive power of angling. Please take the time to read [North Dakota House Bill 1538](#) and the attached information sheet outlining the reasons for [Bill 1538](#) being introduced into the North Dakota House.

Then take the time to write testimony about how the current tournament Century Code in North Dakota has affected you and how the new proposed bill will affect you.

Please include testimony that includes

1. The financial ramifications for you in the organizations you are a part of.
2. The effects of the charities and causes you support
3. How important it is that you have the opportunity to compete on your home waters on a national stage.
4. The opportunities that exist in other states that North Dakota is limiting.
5. The amount of money spent each year on fishing tackle and equipment that is split between the 50 states through excise tax dollars collected for the [Dingell Johnson Act](#).

Make sure that you are honest and fair and take this time to tell your story and not complain about or accuse others.

After you have done this click on this link [Submit Testimony](#), fill out the information and upload your written testimony.

The first hearing for [North Dakota House Bill 1538](#) will be held on [February, 3 at 9 AM](#) in the Coteau AB room at the North Dakota Capitol. Check the two links above for any changes to this time or date.

We need every angler, business owner, nonprofit group and parent who wants their kids to have the opportunity to participate in student angling to submit [Submit Written Testimony](#) and show up on [February, 3 at 9 AM](#).

Thank you for telling your story and being a positive part of the process.

Information Sheet

North Dakota House Bill 1538

Background

The current statutes governing fishing tournaments in North Dakota have a long history heading back to the early 1980's. The changes that are included in House Bill 1538 are to remedy the unintended consequences, unforeseen technological changes and new opportunities that the original authors of the current statutes had no way foreseeing at the time they were written. The changes contained within this bill are intended to make competitive angling available for anglers of all walks of life and all ages, accessible for residents of and visitors to North Dakota. The purpose of House Bill 1538 is not to take away the oversight of fishing tournaments from the North Dakota Game & Fish but to allow them to focus on competitive angling events that are on a single body of water and are outside of normal day to day fishing pressures.

Unintended Consequences

The current statutes that have been in place for nearly 40 years have had many unintended and negative consequences; some of which are listed here.

1. The current statute is negatively impacting not only recruitment and retention of new anglers, but is also driving funds to other states while hurting the reputation of North Dakota.
2. The application of the current statute is the sole roadblock for student angling in North Dakota. Target shooting, archery and angling are the 3 fastest growing high school sports in America. Currently students are prevented from being able to participate in high school angling programs at home in ND.
3. Fishing tournaments are one of, if not the only, event/s that a non profit is required to give away monies raised for their organization to the participants of the fundraisers and to the NDGF. This hinders positive impacts on communities and is having a negative impact on the fishing culture in North Dakota.
4. The current statute prevents organizations from inside and outside of the state of ND from holding and promoting youth angling events.
5. The current statute and application of this legislation is negatively impacting North Dakota communities who rely on recreational income in their communities. In some situations, communities are forced to give up revenue in the millions.
6. The current statute does not promote new and outside anglers to fish North Dakota waters that greatly reduces needed revenue for the NDGF.
7. The current statute and administration is adversely affecting the groups that pay the most in outdoor recreational excise tax.

Purpose of House Bill 1538

1. The proposed changes are intended to alleviate the negative impact to non profit organizations which the current statute was originally meant to protect.
2. The current statute has North Dakota Game and Fish overstepping their jurisdictional responsibilities/authority in some cases. This Bill allows the Game and Fish to stay within their jurisdictional authorities and boundaries.
3. Fishing is one of if not the only activity in ND that takes away a resident's ability to compete with a home field advantage in the sport they love. This Bill will give North Dakota anglers of all ages and abilities the opportunity to compete in the sport they love at home.
4. The current application of this statute is unable to coexist with regional & national online activities. Examples are: take your kids fishing events, nonprofit fundraising events, online fishing clubs and more. House Bill 1538 removes these online events from being defined as a fishing tournament.

5. The current statute aims to protect our fishing resources, but current conservation fees do not go back to replace the fish that are taken during a tournament. House Bill 1538 removes the current conservation fee in order to remove the unintended consequences listed above.

Opposition to House Bill 1538

The opposition to the proposed changes can be narrowed down to three general categories:

1. Current grantees of conservation fees.
2. Individuals and groups who would prefer to keep any outside angler from in or out of state away from their local waters.
3. Individuals and groups who disapprove of tournament angling.

Other Needed Solutions

When you take a step back and take a look at the contention of House Bill 1538 all the way back to the original legislation written in the early 1980s, there is one practical topic that has never been adequately addressed by any group involved in the discussions and/or arguments. The state of North Dakota does a poor job of funding conservation and lake access outside of grant dollars for its land management agencies. Many of the problems and complaints brought up from opponents of Bill 1538 would be solved if our land management agencies were provided with state dollars to maintain a minimum standard of access to North Dakota outdoor resources. Currently, we are asking a small handful of the 80,000 plus boaters in ND to cover lake access for everyone. This also becomes an apparent problem that needs a remedy in the winter months when lake access is all but ignored by state and local officials. Passing House Bill 1538 will remedy the unintended consequences for many individuals in North Dakota, but not passing House Bill 1538 will never solve the core issue to those who are opposed to this Bill.

Many of the current conservation fee dollars are returned to the organization or sister organization that originally paid the conservation fee. This only costs tax payers additional administrative dollars that are not necessary to be spent.