

Testimony in support of: North Dakota House Bill 1538

Date: February 2, 2023

Submitted by: Spencer Deutz, Tournament Angler, Youth Fishing Advocate

My name is Spencer Deutz and I am submitting my testimony in support of HB 1538. Currently, I am a resident of Cass County. I have fished tournaments in the state of ND for the last 20 years. These tournaments consist of professional events on a national level to local, non-profit and youth events. More importantly, I am an ambassador for the National Professional Angler's Association's (NPAA) Future Angler Foundation (FAF). Here is my story.

Growing up in ND, all I ever wanted to do is become a professional tournament angler. There are many different paths to achieve this goal but as a kid in ND, where would you start? The first place is to attend national level tournaments in the area. Events at this level open the eyes of young kids to the industry and what it entails. So, this is exactly what I did. I attended FLW and PWT events when they came to the Devils Lake and Bismarck areas. This allowed me to see what the sport of professional fishing was all about. Not only did these organizations hold fishing tournaments, but they held Youth Fishing Clinics at the weigh-in's. These clinics taught kids of all ages about the sport of fishing. The kids (myself at the time) were also given free rod/reels.

After attending those events as a child, I knew I wanted to do both when I grew up: fish events at all levels and host Youth and Family Fishing Clinics. These tournaments would allow me to compete in a sport at the highest level in a State where I had home field advantage. The Youth and Family Fishing Clinics would allow me help grow the sport of fishing through education and outreach. The kids that would attend these clinics would not only be the future of the sport, but also be future customers of our local sporting goods stores bringing and keeping money locally.

Fast forward 22 years to today. I currently fish tournaments at all levels but most importantly, I am an ambassador for the NPAA FAF. I have organized and hosted over 60 Youth and Family Fishing Clinics Educating over 1000 kids on the sport of fishing. At these clinics, the kids learn fish identification, knot tying, casting, how to net fish, on the water safety and most importantly, how to stop the spread of aquatic nuisance species.

Now, why I am telling you this story. The answer is this. With the current bill in place, the events I attended 25 years ago in the state of ND that got me hooked promoting the sport of fishing through education and outreach, would not have happened solely because of the 10% conservation fee. Due to that, over 1000 kids today would be without fishing rods and education on the sport, the majority being from ND. This includes education on protecting our ND waterways by preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species.

By passing Bill 1538, this would allow the next generation of anglers to attend national events in their home state as well as learn about the sport through the industry's leading experts. Who knows, maybe one of these youngsters from ND will be the next ambassador of the NPAA FAF

and will educate and promote the sport of fishing for many generations to come. Therefore, I support bill 1538.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Spencer Deutz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Spencer Deutz