

Attn: Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
Re: House Bill 1538 – Fishing Tournaments
Date: March 16, 2023
Position: Oppose

Hello, my name is Perry Kapaun. I live in Valley City and I have been the President of the Barnes County Wildlife for over 30 years. We currently have 438 members which is the biggest wildlife club in North Dakota. On HB 1538 we encourage a NO vote. I have read most of the testimonies for and against the bill and no one has mentioned that most of the fishing public do not like fishing tournaments at all. After a certain date the ND Game & Fish does not allow catch and release tournaments because too many fish don't survive due to the warmer water. The public sees all these fish die without having a chance at catching them.

The survey I added to my written testimony shows that both non-tournament anglers and tournament anglers support the 10% pay back (92% percent non-tournament anglers, 68% of tournament participants and 58% of clubs agree).

In Barnes County we run two fishing tournaments per year. One tournament in the winter and one in June. There are two main reasons they are accepted in Barnes County. First, we are very much youth oriented. In the winter derby we give free rods and reels to 100 kids and in the summer derby we have special prizes for Mom, or Dad, or Grandma, or Grandpa with a youth (which we set at 30 years old). But the biggest reason by far is what Barnes County Wildlife has given back to the resource in the last 25 years. With the 10% of proceeds from our fishing derbies plus a lot of raffles we have put more than \$400,000 in resources up at Lake Ashtabula and surrounding water.

At Lake Ashtabula we have put in four fishing piers at a tune of \$40+ thousand each. Valley City has a lot of "Open-Door" residents that love these docks because they are 100% handicap accessible for them. They also receive a lot of use from non-boat anglers. We have also put in four state of the art fish cleaning tables which are also 100% handicap accessible and well lit. We are currently working with the ND Game & Fish and the Corp of Engineers on a new table that alone costs \$50,000.

Another major concern I have with this bill is the impact to smaller clubs. I worry that if this Bill is passed that the smaller clubs will quit doing their projects around the state. When you do have local sponsors and community support, they take great pride in keeping projects local and I worry this will be lost!

In closing I want to say that the majority of North Dakota fisherman and women agree with the 10% conservation fee. As for the Pro's or bigger tournaments I want to quote from the House Testimony. It was stated, "let's work to find conservation money elsewhere, like price increases to license a boat, raising out of state license fee, or implement a boat dock fee." What this says to me is we should raise the fees for everyone else but not us Pro's! In my opinion,

the ND Game & Fish has done a great job managing the derby funds the last 40 plus years with major public support. So why change for a few Pro's that come to our state?"

Thank you.

Perry Kapaun