

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee - Testimony in support of SB2155 Relating to Gratis Antelope Licenses

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Steve Goroski, and I am a long-time North Dakota resident, avid sportsman, bowhunter and conservationist of ND for almost 50 years. I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 2155, which would restore equitable fairness of the pronghorn antelope lottery process by the ND Game and Fish.

Back around 2009 the bowhunters of North Dakota had to give up the opportunity at an archery only tag available each year after a serious decline in numbers across the state. We were accepting of this change due to the lower number of animals found on the landscape and remains the same 15 years later. The bowhunters ultimately had a much lower success and did not impact the overall harvest by rifle hunters.

The current lottery process for gratis applications has been around longer than anyone currently at the ND Game and Fish can remember why it was even set to the current format. While I respect the rights of landowners to receive tags, it is essential to ensure that public hunters have equitable access to pronghorn hunting opportunities.

By eliminating the preferential allocation of the first 50 tags to landowners and establishing a straight 50/50 split, this bill would return some fairness back to the lottery process. I believe this bill strikes a fair balance between landowner privileges and public hunting opportunities. While also allowing the ND Game and Fish to further open additional areas of opportunity that may have fewer than 50 licenses available allowing the public a chance at drawing a tag and not just for those eligible for a gratis opportunity.

I was able to draw my last tag after 16 years of applying and fully expect my next tag to take over 20 years if I am even still around or capable of enjoying the experience once again. I appreciate you taking the time to read this testimony and hope that you will consider 'change' for the future of SB 2155.

I urge you to support SB2155 with a DO PASS from the committee.

Sincerely,

Steve Goroski

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