



North Dakota House of Representatives

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Good morning, Chairman Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

For the record, my name is **Dawson Holle**, and I am honored to serve the great people of **District 31**. Today, I come before you to introduce **House Bill 1429**, a piece of legislation aimed at regulating the **surveillance and harassment of robots**.

Technology is advancing rapidly, and as it does, our laws must evolve to ensure that **new innovations are used responsibly and ethically**. Originally, this bill focused on **regulating drones**, addressing growing concerns over **privacy violations, unauthorized surveillance, and disruptions to private property**. However, through discussions and refinements, it has transformed into a **broader protection against the misuse of robotic technology**, focusing specifically on **how individuals interact with these machines** rather than simply restricting their operation.

At its core, **HB 1429** establishes clear boundaries regarding the use of robots for surveillance purposes. This bill **prohibits individuals from using robots to conduct unauthorized surveillance**, ensuring that **people's privacy is protected from intrusive or unethical monitoring**. However, this regulation **does not apply to law enforcement** or to **individuals who have obtained consent from the property owner** for purposes such as photography. This exemption is crucial because it **allows beneficial uses of robotic technology to continue while still preventing potential abuses**.

In addition to addressing **privacy concerns**, **HB 1429** includes a **critical provision that protects livestock and wildlife from harassment by robotic devices**. As

agriculture becomes increasingly integrated with technology, we must ensure that **robotic advancements do not come at the expense of animal welfare**. Whether it be **autonomous drones disturbing a herd of cattle** or **unmanned vehicles interfering with wildlife**, this bill sets **necessary guidelines to prevent unnecessary stress and harm to animals** while still allowing for the **responsible use of robotics in agricultural operations**.

To illustrate the importance of this bill, let's consider a **realistic scenario**: Imagine a **dairy farm** in North Dakota. One day, a drone pilot—without the farm owner's permission—decides to fly a drone over the property, assuming it won't cause harm. However, as the pilot navigates the drone, **the unpredictable North Dakota wind causes them to lose control**. The drone suddenly **dives and crashes into a dairy pen**, striking a cow. The impact **severely injures the animal**, slicing it open. Now, the **farmer must cover costly veterinary bills**, and the **drone operator must trespass onto the property** to retrieve their device.

Unfortunately, this is **not just a hypothetical scenario**. A similar incident has actually occurred, involving **an animal rights activist who flew a drone over a dairy farm**. Their intent was **not to provide informative content, but to portray the farm negatively** in hopes of shutting it down. This growing concern among **animal agriculture operations** is something I've heard directly from **farmers across North Dakota**.

Additionally, **drones create a loud buzzing noise that can startle livestock**, particularly **cattle**, which are naturally skittish. This can lead to **panicked animals breaking through fences, slipping, and injuring themselves—potentially even breaking a leg**. These are **real risks that farmers face**, and **HB 1429** is a **necessary step to prevent such incidents from happening in the future**.

By passing this legislation, North Dakota would be **taking a proactive step toward safeguarding privacy, protecting agricultural interests, and ensuring that robotic technology is used responsibly and ethically**. As we continue to integrate **automation and robotics** into our daily lives, it is essential that we implement **common-sense regulations to prevent potential abuses before they become widespread issues**.

I appreciate the committee's time and consideration of this bill. **I look forward to answering any questions you may have and working together to ensure that we find the best path forward for North Dakota's technological and agricultural future**.

Thank you.