

Testimony Opposing SB2155

Chairman Patten and Energy and Natural Resources Committee

My name is Jeremy Maher, and I am a farm and ranch owner in Sioux County, ND. I am here today to oppose SB2155.

This bill proposes reducing the number of gratis tags available to landowners to a strict 50% of the number of buck tags issued. In Unit 6A, this would mean over half of the landowners who applied for a tag in 2024 would not have received one—25% more than last year. For those of us who live and work on the land, this is a significant and unnecessary burden.

If antelope populations were to increase, this issue could resolve itself because the number of tags available would exceed the demand for gratis applications—just as we currently see with deer. However, until that happens, this bill penalizes landowners, making it even harder for us to access the species we help support through responsible land management.

This legislation directly contradicts ongoing efforts by Game and Fish, as well as other groups, to foster positive relationships between landowners and hunters. What incentive is there for a landowner to allow others to hunt on their property when they cannot hunt the species themselves? SB2155 creates division rather than collaboration and will result in fewer open gates for hunters.

I urge you to reject SB2155 to protect the interests of landowners and the collaborative spirit necessary for effective wildlife management.

Thank you for your time.