

**2025 HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**HB 1554**

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

HB 1554

1/31/2025

Relating to the North Dakota outdoor heritage advisory board.
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10:51 a.m. Chairman Porter called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Porter, Vice Chairman Anderson, Vice Chair Novak,  
Representatives: Dockter, Hagert, Headland, Heinert, Johnson, Marschall, Olson, M. Ruby,  
Conmy, Foss

### Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action
- General fund dollars
- Outdoor Heritage fund
- Board Member requirements

10:51 a.m. Representative D. Anderson introduced the bill and submitted testimony.  
#33224

10:54 a.m. Brenna Jessen, Grants Officer and Fiscal Manager, ND Industrial  
Commission, testified in favor and submitted testimony. #33228

10:56 a.m. Reice Haase, Director of the Department of Water Resources, testified in  
favor and submitted testimony. #32462

10:58 a.m. Jade Koski, ND Stockholm's Association, testified in favor.

11:01 a.m. Matt Perdue, Government Relations Director, ND farmers Union, testified in  
favor and submitted testimony. #33128

11:02 a.m. Rhonda Keltch, Executive Director, ND Association of Soil Conservation  
Districts, testified in favor.

11:06 a.m. Chairman Porter closed the hearing.

11:06 a.m. Vice Chairman D. Anderson moved to replace paragraph 6 on Pg. 2 as in his  
testimony. #33224

11:06 a.m. Representative Headland seconded the motion.

Voice vote: Motion carried

11:06 a.m. Vice Chairman D. Anderson moved a Do Pass as Amended.

11:06 a.m. Vice Chairman Novak seconded the motion.

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Dick Anderson	Y
Representative Anna Novak	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative Jason Dockter	Y
Representative Austin Foss	Y
Representative Jared c. Hagert	Y
Representative Craig Headland	Y
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Jorin Johnson	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Jeremy L. Olson	Y
Representative Matthew Ruby	AB

Motion carried: 12-0-1

Bill carrier: Representative Foss

**Additional written testimony:**

Tyler Dokken, Chairman, ND Outdoor Heritage Board, submitted testimony in favor. #31265

Tom Claeys, ND Forest Service, submitted testimony in favor. #32887

Jeb Williams, Director, ND Game and Fish Department, submitted testimony in favor. #33018

David Dewald, ND Resident, submitted testimony in favor. #33073

11:08 a.m. Chairman Porter closed the hearing.

*Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

### HOUSE BILL NO. 1554

Introduced by

Representatives D. Anderson, Headland, O'Brien, Schauer, Vollmer, Novak

Senators Dwyer, Thomas

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 54-17.8-06 of the North Dakota Century Code,  
2 relating to the North Dakota outdoor heritage advisory board.

### 3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

4 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 54-17.8-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
5 amended and reenacted as follows:

#### 6 **54-17.8-06. North Dakota outdoor heritage advisory board - Members.**

7 1. There is created a North Dakota outdoor heritage advisory board consisting of twelve  
8 members. The governor shall appoint representatives from each of the groups listed in  
9 this section based upon recommendations made by the appropriate group. The  
10 advisory board consists of:

- 11 a. Four members from the agriculture community. The governor shall appoint one  
12 member from the North Dakota farm bureau, North Dakota farmers union, the  
13 North Dakota stockmen's association, and the North Dakota grain growers  
14 association.
- 15 b. Two members from the energy industry. The governor shall appoint one member  
16 from the North Dakota petroleum council and one member from the lignite energy  
17 council.
- 18 c. Four members from the conservation community. The governor shall appoint the  
19 members from the conservation community at large of statewide conservation  
20 groups.

- 1 d. One member from the business community from the greater North Dakota
- 2 chamber.
- 3 e. One member from the North Dakota recreation and park association.
- 4 2. The governor also shall appoint to the advisory board one representative from each of
- 5 the following agencies to serve as ex officio, nonvoting technical members: the
- 6 department of parks and recreation, the department of water resources, the game and
- 7 fish department, the office of the state forester, and the North Dakota association of
- 8 soil conservation districts.
- 9 3. The term of office of each member of the board is four years and members may not
- 10 serve more than two consecutive terms. The terms of office commence on the first day
- 11 of July. The initial terms for the advisory board members must be staggered following
- 12 a method determined by the board.
- 13 4. The advisory board shall select a chairman from among the members. Seven voting
- 14 members is a quorum at any meeting.
- 15 5. The advisory board shall have at least two regular meetings each year and additional
- 16 meetings as the chairman determines necessary at a time and place to be fixed by the
- 17 chairman. Special meetings must be called by the chairman on written request of any
- 18 five members.
- 19 6. The advisory board may not forward a grant application ~~shall recommend~~ to the
- 20 commission unless the application is ~~approval of grants~~ for funding activities that fulfill
- 21 the purposes of this chapter and the application receives a favorable recommendation
- 22 from a majority of the advisory board members present at a meeting at which a
- 23 quorum is present.
- 24 7. Members of the advisory board appointed by the governor serve at the pleasure of the
- 25 governor.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
HB 1554**

**Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Rep. Porter, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.1279.01001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1554 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

**Dear Committee Members,**

I am writing today in support of HB 1554 and ask you to vote "DO PASS".

The changes put forward in the bill cover two updates for the Outdoor Heritage Fund:

1. **Addition of the Department of Water Resources to the O.H.F. Technical Committee:** We receive a fair number of water-related requests, and the additional expertise will be put to good use.
2. **Adjustment of the Voting Requirement for Proposal Submission:** Currently, a majority of board members is required for a proposal to be sent to the Industrial Commission (7/12 votes required). The O.H.F. board consists of members from different backgrounds and industries, making it challenging to find a meeting date that works for everyone. In the past, some grant requests received a majority of votes from members present but failed due to not meeting the overall majority requirement (6 votes instead of 7).

Thank you for considering these important updates.

Sincerely,

Tyler Dokken

ND Outdoor Heritage Board Chairman



Testimony in Support of  
**HB 1554**  
**House Energy & Natural Resources**  
January 31, 2025

TESTIMONY OF

**Reice Haase, Director, Department of Water Resources**

Chairman Porter, and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I am Reice Haase, Director of the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and Secretary to the State Water Commission. I'm here today to provide testimony in support of House Bill (HB) 1554 related to adding DWR as an ex officio, nonvoting technical member of North Dakota's Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board.

DWR administers a Cost-Share Program that provides financial support for a variety of water-related infrastructure projects. The Outdoor Heritage Fund is administered through the Industrial Commission. Because there are projects that apply to both the Outdoor Heritage Fund and DWR's Cost-Share Program, coordination between our team and the Industrial Commission is ongoing. This is to ensure that we're aware of projects that might be applying to both sources so we can adjust grants accordingly – since state funds cannot be used as part of the local share.

The addition of DWR as an ex officio, nonvoting technical member of North Dakota's Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board will be another opportunity to improve communication and coordination between the granting entities, and to provide direct technical support whenever necessary. Therefore, we respectfully request your support and approval of HB 1554.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, this concludes my testimony in support of HB 1554, and I will stand for any questions you might have.



**69<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY****House Bill 1554 - “A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 54-17.8-06 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the North Dakota outdoor heritage advisory board.”**

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

January 31, 2025

Testimony Submitted by:

Tom Claeys, State Forester

Outdoor Heritage Fund - Technical Committee Member

Chairman Porter, members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, for the record, my name is Tom Claeys, North Dakota Forest Service - State Forester and Outdoor Heritage Fund - non-voting Technical Committee Member.

As a member of the technical committee for the past six years and having served occasionally for the former State Forester since inception of the OHF committee, our agency is supportive of the changes proposed in HB 1554.

Allowing expanded representation from the Department of Water Resources would be a welcome improvement for the Technical Committee. Currently the technical committee consists of the ND Game & Fish Department, ND Parks and Recreation Department, North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts and the North Dakota Forest Service. In the first 25 grant rounds, many of the proposed projects have had water-related components, and historically, a number of them included additional funding committed by the Department of Water Resources. The Department's expertise and knowledge of these projects would help the technical committee provide timely, professional guidance to the voting members of the OHF Committee.

Given the committees terms of office, periodic turnover and need for continuity, any enabling language that helps clarify, streamline or simplify the selection process would be welcome. Our collective goal should be to ensure eligible applicants, with qualifying projects, that are technically sound, and meet one or more Directives, have an opportunity to be favorably considered for OHF funding. The proposed changes to Century Code, relating to approval of grants, will help facilitate the process.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in favor of House Bill 1554 and would stand for questions, while acknowledging that there are others here today prepared to testify and share their perspectives.

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House Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
Testimony on HB 1554

North Dakota Game and Fish Department  
Jeb Williams, Director  
January 31, 2025

Chairman Porter, members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, for the record, my name is Jeb Williams, and I serve as the Director of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (Department). The Department's director also serves as a non-voting technical committee member of the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF).

As a member of this technical committee for the past three and a half years, our agency supports the changes proposed in HB 1554. The addition of the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to the existing technical committee would be a valuable enhancement, given the wide variety of projects reviewed by the committee. These projects currently benefit from the expertise of representatives from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department, the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts, and the North Dakota Forest Service.

Since the inception of the OHF, many proposed projects have included water-related components, with several receiving additional funding from the Department of Water Resources. The DWR's expertise would provide critical insight and guidance, strengthening the technical committee's ability to offer timely, professional recommendations to the voting members of the OHF Committee.

Dear members of House Energy and Natural Resources, I am writing in support of House Bill 1554.

I urge a "Do Pass" vote on 1554. The two provisions of the bill: 1. remove the requirement for 7 votes to forward an OHF application to the Industrial Commission and 2. add the Department of Water Resources to the OHF Advisory board are both positive changes to the law.

The current 7 vote requirement to forward applications to the Industrial Commission, at times, has not allowed good projects to get a favorable recommendation when less than the 14 board members are present. Even though a majority of the board members present may vote for an application, the 7-vote requirement hinders potentially good projects from advancing.

We have received numerous applications that apply to North Dakota water resources. Technical input for the Department would be helpful to provide clarity of applications to OHF board members.

I urge a "Do Pass" of HB 1554



Contact:

**Matt Perdue, Lobbyist**

[mperdue@ndfu.org](mailto:mperdue@ndfu.org) | 701.641.3303

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**Testimony of  
Matt Perdue  
North Dakota Farmers Union  
Before the  
House Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
January 31, 2025**

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Chairman Porter and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1554. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union's (NDFU) members. NDFU supports HB 1554.

NDFU is proud to have a seat on the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) Advisory Board. Many of the projects funded by OHF support conservation on working agricultural lands. That support helps family farmers and ranchers build on their strong history of stewardship. We believe a strong OHF process is beneficial to the success of the fund.

We support the addition of the Department of Water Resources as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the OHF Advisory Board. This legislation would also allow OHF to advance a project funding recommendation with a majority vote of the advisory board members present. Under the current process, a majority of all advisory board members must approve of a project before it moves forward. It is common for boards to require a majority vote of members present, and we think this is an appropriate change.

We are concerned that the existing language does not capture the full intent of the bill. In its current form, HB 1554 simply states the OHF Advisory board "shall recommend...approval of grants." We understand the intent of the legislation is to require a majority vote of the advisory board for that recommendation. We support amending the language to make that intent clear.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We encourage the committee to adopt the proposed amendment and respectfully request a "Do Pass" recommendation on HB 1554.

HB 1554

Page 2, Line 16 Proposed Amendment:

6. "The advisory board may not forward a grant application to the commission unless the application is for funding activities that fulfill the purposes of this chapter and receives a favorable recommendation from a majority of the advisory board members present at the meeting, as long as the board has enough members to constitute a quorum."

## Testimony in Support of

HB 1554

Chairman Porter, members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, for the record, Brenna Jessen – Grants Officer and Fiscal Manager for the ND Industrial Commission, and I have the pleasure of having the Outdoor Heritage Fund in my portfolio where I assist the Chairman in facilitating the board meetings and see the grants through from start to finish.

The Industrial Commission holds a favorable position in the addition of the Department of Water Resources to the OHF non-voting technical committee. There are many applications that have various water components whose applicants are also trying to secure funds from the Department of Water Resources, and because an applicant cannot use other State general fund dollars as local match, having a member of the Department of Water Resources on the technical committee would allow for better communication and transparency between the departments.

The Industrial Commission is also requesting, and in favor of, adjusting the current language for the Outdoor Heritage Fund quorum requirements. Currently, a majority of board members is required for a proposal to be sent to the Industrial Commission, which would be 7/12 members voting in favor. Because the Outdoor Heritage Fund board consists of members from different backgrounds and industries, it can be very challenging to find a meeting date that works for every board member, which in turn has led to some voting issues. For example, in our last two grant rounds, there were a handful of grant applications that received favorable votes from the majority of those members present – so 6 members voting yes out of the 10 members that were present - But due to current language and those proposals not receiving the 7 votes necessary, the projects could not move forward.

The other grant programs under the Industrial Commission, including the Clean Sustainable Energy Authority, Renewable Energy Council, Oil and Gas Research Council, and the Lignite Energy Council all require the majority of voting members PRESENT to vote favorably for an application to be able to move forward to the Industrial Commission. So, we ask that the Outdoor Heritage Fund be treated the same way as those other grant programs. This concludes my testimony for HB 1554 and I will stand for any questions you may have.

Brenna Jessen

Grants Officer and Fiscal Manager

ND Industrial Commission

**2025 SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**HB 1554**

# 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Energy and Natural Resources Committee Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

HB 1554  
3/7/2025

A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 54-17.8-06 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the North Dakota outdoor heritage advisory board.

11:00 a.m. Chairman Patten opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Patten, Vice Chairman Kessel, Senators Beard, Boehm, Enget, Gerhardt, and Van Oosting.

### Discussion Topics:

- Outdoor Heritage Fund Requirements
- Communication Between Grant Programs
- Agriculture Organizations Support
- Challenges in Meeting Schedules

11:00 a.m. Brenna Jessen, ND Industrial Commission Grants Officer and Fiscal Manager, testified in favor.

11:04 a.m. Reice Haase, ND DWR Director, testified in favor.

11:05 a.m. Jade Koski, ND Stockman's Association, testified in favor.

11:06 a.m. Tom Claeys, Outdoor Heritage Committee, testified in favor.

11:07 a.m. Ryan Gregg, ND Farmers Union, testified in favor.

11:08 a.m. Chairman Patten closed the hearing.

11:09 a.m. Senator Enget moved to amend by adding an emergency clause.

11:09 a.m. Senator Van Oosting seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Dale Patten	Y
Senator Greg Kessel	Y
Senator Todd Beard	Y
Senator Keith Boehm	Y
Senator Mark Enget	Y
Senator Justin Gerhardt	Y
Senator Desiree Van Oosting	Y

Motion Passed 7-0-0.



11:10 a.m. Senator Kessel moved a Do Pass as Amended.

11:10 a.m. Senator Beard seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Dale Patten	Y
Senator Greg Kessel	Y
Senator Todd Beard	Y
Senator Keith Boehm	Y
Senator Mark Enget	Y
Senator Justin Gerhardt	Y
Senator Desiree Van Oosting	Y

Motion Passed 7-0-0.

Senator Van Oosting will carry the bill.

**Additional written testimony:**

Patrick Fridgen, Department of Water Resources, submitted testimony #38914 in favor.

Rhonda Kelsch, North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts, submitted testimony #39365 in favor.

Matt Perdue, North Dakota Farmers Union, submitted testimony #39501 in favor.

11:11 a.m. Chairman Patten closed the hearing.

*Elizabeth Reiten for Kendra McCann, Committee Clerk*

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO  
FIRST ENGROSSMENT**

**ENGROSSED HOUSE BILL NO. 1554**

Introduced by

Representatives D. Anderson, Headland, O'Brien, Schauer, Vollmer, Novak

Senators Dwyer, Thomas

3-7-25  
JLB  
lobz

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact section 54-17.8-06 of the North Dakota Century Code,  
2 relating to the North Dakota outdoor heritage advisory board; and to declare an emergency.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

4 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 54-17.8-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
5 amended and reenacted as follows:

6 **54-17.8-06. North Dakota outdoor heritage advisory board - Members.**

7 1. There is created a North Dakota outdoor heritage advisory board consisting of twelve  
8 members. The governor shall appoint representatives from each of the groups listed in  
9 this section based upon recommendations made by the appropriate group. The  
10 advisory board consists of:

11 a. Four members from the agriculture community. The governor shall appoint one  
12 member from the North Dakota farm bureau, North Dakota farmers union, the  
13 North Dakota stockmen's association, and the North Dakota grain growers  
14 association.

15 b. Two members from the energy industry. The governor shall appoint one member  
16 from the North Dakota petroleum council and one member from the lignite energy  
17 council.

18 c. Four members from the conservation community. The governor shall appoint the  
19 members from the conservation community at large of statewide conservation  
20 groups.

- 1 d. One member from the business community from the greater North Dakota
- 2 chamber.
- 3 e. One member from the North Dakota recreation and park association.
- 4 2. The governor also shall appoint to the advisory board one representative from each of
- 5 the following agencies to serve as ex officio, nonvoting technical members: the
- 6 department of parks and recreation, the department of water resources, the game and
- 7 fish department, the office of the state forester, and the North Dakota association of
- 8 soil conservation districts.
- 9 3. The term of office of each member of the board is four years and members may not
- 10 serve more than two consecutive terms. The terms of office commence on the first day
- 11 of July. The initial terms for the advisory board members must be staggered following
- 12 a method determined by the board.
- 13 4. The advisory board shall select a chairman from among the members. Seven voting
- 14 members is a quorum at any meeting.
- 15 5. The advisory board shall have at least two regular meetings each year and additional
- 16 meetings as the chairman determines necessary at a time and place to be fixed by the
- 17 chairman. Special meetings must be called by the chairman on written request of any
- 18 five members.
- 19 6. The advisory board may not forward a grant application to the commission unless the
- 20 application is for funding activities that fulfill the purposes of this chapter and the
- 21 application receives a favorable recommendation from a majority of the advisory board
- 22 members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present.
- 23 7. Members of the advisory board appointed by the governor serve at the pleasure of the
- 24 governor.

25 **SECTION 2. EMERGENCY.** This Act is declared to be an emergency measure.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
ENGROSSED HB 1554**

**Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Sen. Patten, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.1279.02001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (7 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1554 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.



Testimony in Support of  
**HB 1554**  
**Senate Energy & Natural Resources**  
March 7, 2025

TESTIMONY OF

**Patrick Fridgen, Division Director, Department of Water Resources**

Chairman Patten, and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I am Patrick Fridgen, Planning and Education Division Director for the Department of Water Resources (DWR). I'm here today to provide testimony in support of House Bill (HB) 1554 related to adding DWR as an ex officio, nonvoting technical member of North Dakota's Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board.

DWR administers a Cost-Share Program that provides financial support for a variety of water-related infrastructure projects. The Outdoor Heritage Fund is administered through the Industrial Commission. Because there are projects that apply to both the Outdoor Heritage Fund and DWR's Cost-Share Program, coordination between our team and the Industrial Commission is ongoing. This is to ensure that we're aware of projects that might be applying to both sources so we can adjust grants accordingly – since state funds cannot be used as part of the local share.

The addition of DWR as an ex officio, nonvoting technical member of North Dakota's Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board will be another opportunity to improve communication and coordination between the granting entities, and to provide direct technical support whenever necessary. Therefore, we respectfully request your support of HB 1554.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, this concludes my testimony in support of HB 1554, and I will stand for any questions you might have.

**2025 69<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly**

**House Bill 1554**

**Ref: Relating to the North Dakota Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board**

**Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee**

**March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Chairman Patten, members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee, for the record my name is Rhonda Kelsch, North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts – Executive Director. I also serve as a non-voting Technical Committee Member since 2013 to the ND Outdoor Heritage Fund.

I was a part of the development team that helped shape the application process along with providing partnership and programmatic information required by the governing body. With the longstanding knowledge of this program in a technical capacity our association is supportive of the changes proposed in House Bill (HB) 1554.

As a technical committee member, we see a wide range of applications that require input on water related components that need further clarification. Many of the applications submitted include dam and watershed restoration, streambank stabilization, and flood plain mitigation. With the additional representation from the North Dakota Department of Water Resources, it will allow us to provide accurate, timely, and correct programmatic guidelines to the voting advisory board members of the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

The integrity of the Outdoor Heritage Fund is the top priority to all members involved during the granting process. We want to ensure all applications meet the technical requirements of both state and federal programs; while meeting the directives for funding approval. Throughout the grant rounds, we have seen an increased demand for water related projects and the proposed changes to the Century Code would align for a more solid technical representation.

We also support funding consideration of an application moving forward based on the majority of board members present which would represent a quorum.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in favor of HB 1554 and ask for your continued support.

Respectfully,

Rhonda Kelsch  
NDASCD Executive Director  
3310 University Drive  
Bismarck, ND 58552  
Outdoor Heritage Fund – Technical Advisor



Contact:  
**Matt Perdue, Lobbyist**  
[mperdue@ndfu.org](mailto:mperdue@ndfu.org) | 701.641.3303

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**Testimony of  
Matt Perdue  
North Dakota Farmers Union  
In support of HB 1554  
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
March 7, 2025**

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Chairman Patten and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1554. My name is Matt Perdue, and I am testifying on behalf of North Dakota Farmers Union's (NDFU) members. NDFU supports HB 1554.

NDFU is proud to have a seat on the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) Advisory Board. Many of the projects funded by OHF support conservation on working agricultural lands. That support helps family farmers and ranchers build on their strong history of stewardship. We believe a strong OHF process is beneficial to the success of the fund.

We support the addition of the Department of Water Resources as an ex officio, nonvoting member of the OHF Advisory Board. The addition of the Department of Water Resources recognizes the important role OHF plays in promoting stewardship of our state's water resources.

This legislation also allows OHF to advance a project funding recommendation with a majority vote of the advisory board members present. Under the current process, a majority of all advisory board members must approve of a project before it moves forward. It is common for boards to require a majority vote of members present, and we think this is an appropriate change.

We believe HB 1554 offers an improvement to the OHF process. We respectfully request a "Do Pass" recommendation on HB 1554. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I will stand for any questions.