

2025 SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SB 2197

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

SB 2197
1/23/2025

Relating to deer hunting with a crossbow.

3:01 p.m. Chairman Patten opened the hearing.

Members present:

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

Discussion Topics:

- Older generation hunters
- Styles and ranges of crossbows
- Handicap crossbow
- Traditional archer season
- Expanded crossbow use
- Deer hunting opportunities

3:01 p.m. Senator Donald Schaible testified in favor and submitted testimony #30737.

3:02 p.m. Rush Shower testified in favor.

3:05 p.m. Jerry Dickens testified in favor.

3:07 p.m. Darrell Belisle, Director, Bowhunters Association ND, testified in opposition and submitted testimony #30584.

3:17 p.m. John Bradley, ND Wildlife Federation, testified in opposition and submitted testimony #30941.

3:20 p.m. Scott Peterson, Deputy Director for Game and Fish, testified as neutral.

3:28 p.m. Chairman Patten closed the hearing.

Kendra McCann, Committee Clerk

SB 2197

Darrell Belisle

North Dakota Bowhunters Association

The North Dakota Bowhunters Association has a long standing objection to the introduction of crossbows in North Dakotas Archery season. We believe the Archery season should be reserved for those who accept the challenges of harvesting a game animal with conventional archery equipment. Crossbows have evolved many fold in the last few years, and greatly reduce the challenges of Bowhunting. The introduction opportunity of Crossbows into our North Dakota archery season would certainly cause harm to archery season and opportunity. However, in this case of SB 2197, it may be somewhat unnecessary to go into detail about the harmful effects of crossbows.

North Dakota allows the use of crossbows in two other, already existing scenarios. One is, crossbows are allowed in our November "any weapon" season for use with a hunters lottery drawn tag. I agree, this option may not be of interest to some of our older generation hunters.

The other opportunity, **which the North Dakota Bowhunters Association supports**, is the Handicap crossbow permit. To acquire this permit, a hunter must obtain an application from the North Dakota Game & Fish Department and have it signed by a medical professional. The ND Game and Fish Department provides a 5 year permit for those with severe disability and a one year permit for those with lesser handicap. As the requirements seem fairly lenient, I can only imagine that most hunters 75 years of age and older would qualify for a permit.

Another note to understand is, the minimum legal draw weight (amount of pull) for conventional archery equipment in North Dakota is 35 pounds. To put this in perspective, 27 years ago, when my son was 9, he had no trouble drawing a 40 pound bow and harvested his first deer. In the last 27 years, conventional archery bows have remained about the same. One thing which has changed is they are now easier to draw than before.

The North Dakota Bowhunters Association would like you to consider the information I have provided and discourage you from adding another section to our current Archery opportunity.

Sincerely,

Darrell Belisle

NDBA Government and Conservation Director



North Dakota Senate

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
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**Senator Donald Schaible**

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9115 Highway 21
Mott, ND 58646-9200
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COMMITTEES:

Appropriations

1/23/2025

Good morning, Chairman Patten and members of the Energy and Natural Resource Committee. For the record, I am Senator Don Schaible, District 31, here to introduce SB 2197. The idea for a bill draft was brought to the attention of a patron of mine that would like more opportunities for some experienced bow hunters. This bill draft would allow for anyone over the age of 75 to use a crossbow during any deer bow season.

Chairman Patton and Committee there are others behind that would further like to explain the intent of this bill and with that I will try to answer your questions.

Senator Don Schaible

TESTIMONY OF JOHN BRADLEY
NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION
SENATE BILL 2197
SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
JANUARY 23, 2025

Chairman Patten and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

For the record, I am John Bradley, Executive Director of the North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF). NDWF is opposed to SB 2199.

North Dakotans cherish their deer hunting opportunity. Many wait years to draw a tag for a specific coveted unit. Opening up crossbow opportunities would diminish deer hunting opportunities for the general sportsmen. Crossbows have become quite sophisticated over the last two decades, boasting speeds close to 400 FPS and now offered with a variety of latest scopes, making their effective range much farther than compound bows and other traditional archery equipment. The existing bow season is statewide and encompasses all units, adding additional crossbow opportunities would further crowd and increase hunter pressure in certain units.

North Dakota already allows the use of crossbows in two other scenarios. First, crossbows can be used by anyone, regardless of age during North Dakota's "any weapon" season with a hunter lottery drawn tag. The second opportunity is the medical disability crossbow permit. To acquire this permit, a hunter, regardless of age, must obtain an application from the Game & Fish Department and have it signed by his or her medical professional. The Game and Fish Department offers a 5 year permit for those with a severe disability and a one year permit for those with lesser disability that may be recoverable. Both of these options can be renewed with another application and doctor/s note.

We urge a Do Not Pass on SB 2197.

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

SB 2197
1/24/2025

Relating to deer hunting with a crossbow.

9:42 a.m. Chairman Patten opened the hearing.

Members present:

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

Discussion Topics:

- Handicap crossbow permit
- Permit availability
- Equivalent of gun permit
- Crossbow during deer gun season

9:47 a.m. Senator Gerhardt moved a Do Not Pass.

9:47 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.

9:48 a.m. Senator Van Oosting will carry the bill.

9:49 a.m. Committee discussion on upcoming schedule.

9:56 a.m. Chairman Patten closed the meeting.

Kendra McCann, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
SB 2197 ([25.0796.01000](#))

Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Sen. Patten, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (7 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2197 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.