

Members of the Natural Resources Committee,

I am in favor of HB1151. Please vote yes on HB1151.

After researching the data and reviewing the numbers on CWD, there are been less than 1% positive. The studies do not show the positive numbers are coming from bait piles. I am thankful for the trained biologists and others for doing research to help control this disease, but the studies/data/numbers are not enough at this time to prohibit baiting. Prohibiting the baiting of deer for the short hunting season is not the solution, as it will not prevent the hundreds of deer that group together for the long winter months in North Dakota. Any winter night driving around the country side you will see hundreds of deer bunched together at farm yards eating on grain piles/bales, coulees or whatever resources they can find and will continue to go back to the same spot to find food to survive the winter months. Once again, since we live in North Dakota this will continue for the deer to bunch up and eat at the same resource in order to survive the winter months. It is a fact that deer congregate to help each other find food in the winter months, banning bait piles will not prevent this. Due to the North Dakota winters, the data and science needs to prevail so our sportsmen can continue to hunt.

I have been hunting since I was able to get a youth tag in North Dakota with my dad, brothers and cousins. I have 2 daughters, a 12 and a 14 year old that are now involved in the outdoors and hunting. The family and friend time, excitement, outdoor time and education that happens watching the wildlife while hunting will be memories that will never be forgotten. With the fast pace of lives right now, I cherish the time I get to spend with my family sitting in the stand. The learning experience that comes from hunting that my daughters get by watching wildlife, the farmers in the field, nature and the other things from hunting is something that can not be learned in a classroom. If we lose bait piles I know will lose my daughters interest in hunting as well as others such as the younger generations, elderly and the disabled. Everyone deserved the opportunity to get out and hunt. Kids are the future of this great sport, they need every opportunity to keep the tradition of hunting.

By the use of baiting we have had more success and we have been able to take clean shots on the wildlife that we harvest. Allowing us to provide food for our families.

Our bait piles are not just used to harvest wildlife. We are providing mineral blocks to provide vitamins for the wildlife and supplemental food.

The positive values of baiting deer much outweigh the negatives.

The memories from hunting will last a lifetime and hope they get passed on for generations. For this reason, please vote yes on HB1151.

Lets continue to enjoy and pass on the traditions of the great North Dakota outdoors.

Thank you for your time!

Melissa Wittenberg