

Testimony in Favor of **HB 1538**  
House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

February 1, 2023

Chairman Porter and Committee Members:

My name is Darin Miller I am a resident of Burleigh County. I would like to submit testimony in support of **HB 1538**.

I have been a resident of this state and have fished North Dakota waters my entire life. I have participated in hundreds of fishing derbies, fishing fun days, and fishing tournaments over the years. These derbies/tournaments were for kids, a cure for cancer, drug abuse, a memorial, or nonprofit fundraisers. I have also run my company fishing derby for the last 28 years.

I am well-versed regarding all aspects of fishing tournaments, and I am aware of the questions about the smaller tournaments. For example:

- "Why do we have to pay 10% to game and fish when the amount is so small?"
- "Why do we have to pay 10% for this charity tournament when all they are doing is trying to raise money to help a sick person with cancer or to help promote drug awareness?"
- "Where does the 10% fee go?"
- "Does NDGF really need \$30 from our small company tournament?"

Larger fishing tournaments, like the National Walleye Trail (NWT), are often huge fundraisers for the communities that host them. Businesses in towns like Garrison, Devils Lake, and Bismarck could really use this additional income along with the publicity that these events bring to these communities. I am sure North Dakota Tourism is in favor of these professional tournaments being widely viewed on social media like YouTube. This is free advertisement for the state and the community. Not only do these big events help the communities they also give the youth something to attend, the anglers in these tournaments are mentors, educators for the sport, host kids' clinics help promote positive attitudes.

My adult son still talks about going to the Civic Center as a kid to watch the "pros" weigh their fish. It is something parents can do with their kids. We certainly need more of that these days. In many tournaments, the fishermen donate the tournament fish to the assisted living type places, giving back to the community. With the current North Dakota laws, these tournaments will not continue to come here because of the 10% conservation fee. With the smaller to minimal fees in other states, North Dakota is now being overlooked.

In closing I would like to respectfully ask that you pass HB 1538 to continue the great fishing opportunities here in North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Darin Miller