

Testimony in support of: North Dakota House Bill 1538- A bill for an act to amend and reenact subsection 20 of section 20.1-02-5 of the North Dakota Century Code.

Date: February 2

Submitted by: Cody Northrop

201 7th St SW, South Heart, ND 58655

To: Representative Porter and Members of the North Dakota House Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

As a lifelong resident of North Dakota, professional fisherman, outdoorsman, and conservationist, I am writing to voice my support for House Bill 1538

I have fished for many years both recreationally and as a tournament angler on our great waters of North Dakota. I was humbly able to win the 2020 National Walleye Tour tournament held on Lake Sakakawea which is considered the “crown jewel” of walleye tournaments. My success in that event and a career full of other successes on ND waters helped me elevate my professional fishing career and gave me a platform to be recognized on a national level. The current legislation with the conservation fee has driven these large major tournament organizations to other states. South Dakota will have had 4 major events in 3 years since this fee took effect. Half of these would have been in our state. The organizations will not come back if the status stays as is. No other person, including my children will ever be able to experience what I did within our home state again. From a tourism and business level, the financial impacts are quite large to ND cities and communities. High school fishing clubs and teams are gaining popularity within this country by leaps and bounds and none of our kids will get that opportunity either as it stands. Many people outside of our state have approached me with concern that they won't be able to fish tournaments here again. This shows how well our fisheries are liked and envied outside of our state.

Truth be told, tournament fisherman are true conservationists and would never harm our resources. We are spokespeople for the industry, supportive of Game and Fish conservation efforts and give back to our communities and young people – partnering with NDGF, holding fishing clinics and learning opportunities as an example. We have no other choices to promote youth angling as the current statute limits options of organizations to do so.

I overwhelmingly support Bill 1538 and appreciate your consideration and time.

Sincerely, Cody Northrop