

House Energy and Natural Resource Committee:

I am Tim Peterson of the Fargo, ND region and more specifically, the Sheyenne Valley. Over the past 20 years, my family has accumulated 13,000 acres that we own or manage. We cover an area of 70 miles by 40 miles.

Upon following the progress of HB 1151, I thought it was time to voice up at complete atrocity this simple Bill has become. Although our region is not currently in the Baiting Restricted units, it is quite apparent that the push of CWD fear is getting stronger, along the available federal funds that are up for grabs, as well as with the desire to have a statewide baiting ban.

Supplemental feeding for the wildlife, and specifically the deer, is enormous on our land. We spend thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours each year for the health of the herds. Screenings from crops are used to make a specialized blend of 30% sunflower heart, 30% sunflowers and 30% corn. This custom mixture is 8-26% protein. We are often asked how we afford this? Well, when you spend every day with the wildlife and watch them from birth to 8-9 years old, you make the time, and the money, to take care of them. It is a lot of work but it is what we love to do.

Our parents have given us a life in which we are able to be with the herds in our area and we feel the need to take care of this blessing and nature. There are 5-6,000 deer on our land from season to season. We put in 20-30 acres of food plots along with feeding them 33 of our 3rd cutting large round bales of hay so far this winter. For those of you who aren't familiar with hay quality, the third cutting is the most abundant with nutrition.

We know the deer on our land. If a deer disappears, I know that I will either find the dead head or a neighbor will know where it is. We know deer. We live the deer and our land.

CWD is not killing our deer. EHD kills deer. Starvation kills deer. As stated, we have 5-6,000 deer on our land and we know their habits, routines and routes. Every deer in our wooded areas would be dead if what the North Dakota Game and Fish says is happening were true. They congregate and lick all of the time. Deer are not dying. We have deer that I have been following that are 8-9 years old and they are in our feed every day. Having feed available lessens their winter stress, provides nourishment and therefore makes for healthier deer.

What is testing healthy harvested deer doing for the deer of North Dakota? Supplemental feeding, shelter and water is what is important to sustaining our herds.

I am extremely frustrated with the misinformation that is being spread to the people. The motto for the Game and Fish is, "Stop the Spread". I agree, "Stop the Spread of the Misinformation" about CWD.

Organization such as the North Dakota Bowhunters no longer get my membership or support when they choose to "represent" me and do it without my personal representation. I am appalled at their choice to make a statement opposing this Bill without input from members.

Our land is a wildlife paradise and we enjoy sharing with family and the community. We let 5-10 youth hunters each season harvest deer. We don't place any restrictions on their hunt. This past season, 7 doe and 2 bucks were taken with a 100% successful shot rate. Fifty percent of the youth hunters are girls that are 14-15 years old. It is fun to see them get away from the sport for a few years and upon college time, they return with their Dad's to visit our place and rekindle the sport. We are noticing that if kids get a chance to partake in hunting by the time they are 15 years old, they tend to stick with it or come back a few years later.

My father has developed health conditions that won't allow him to walk for long distances therefore, the supplemental feed/bait allows him to enjoy hunting. We have people out that have previously spoken against the act of baiting and when they sit in a blind, with their kids, they have a change of opinion when they see the excitement, dedication and talent that it takes to make a clean shot at a deer out of a blind. It is one thing to get in with the deer and quite another to make a quality shot. They are now realizing that it is about time with family and the memories and relationship that matter way more than the perceived ethics of a bait pile. There are years that I do not harvest a deer. The time with my kids and family is way more important and if you take the right to feed the deer away from me, this time and tradition is lost forever.

HB 1151 is a black and white Bill and if you want to tell me what I can and can't do and can and can't feed on my land, I find that absolutely disgusting and disrespectful . It is asking for the ability to bait when I want to hunt. That is it.

Only an agency can work this hard against the people.

The Amendments on this Bill need to disappear. CWD is not what the Game and Fish are telling everyone. It is not killing the deer like they say. Even the reported numbers prove this. Supplemental feeding for the deer, and wildlife, is needed. They are healthier and have a better chance of survival in the harsh months. Baiting is not spreading anything other than nourishment and less stress. These amendments will kill more deer than CWD ever will. Also, if these amendments were about CWD, wouldn't the Game and Fish have stated they were "needed" with the initial baiting restrictions?

The set back of 150' is absolutely absurd and has nothing to do with CWD and sounds like a personal agenda that should not be forced on the people of North Dakota.

Having a supplement limit is ridiculous. The amount set is what the deer on our land can eat in a few hours. What about the rest of the year? Which leads to the calendar limit amendment. 3 months of supplemental feeding is not going to work. Some of the harshest months are January to April. Again, telling us when, how much and what I can or can't do on MY land?

We love the land and deer in eastern North Dakota and look forward to putting in the time each day to care about their survival. It is a lot of work but it is who we are.

I encourage you to delete this amendments to HB1151 and leave it the original version and pass it on the House.

Sincerely,

Tim Peterson  
Fargo, ND