

2023 SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SB 2297

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

SB 2297
2/3/2023

A bill relating to a lifetime combination license.

9:00 AM Chairman Patten opened the meeting.

Chairman Patten and Senators Kessel, Boehm, Kannianen, Beard and Magrum are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Hunter Education
- Volunteers
- Incentives

9:01 AM Senator Kannianen introduced the bill.

9:04 PM Greg Link, Chief of Conservation Communications, North Dakota Game and Fish, testified in favor of the bill and spoke about proposed amendments. He provided written testimony #18863.

9:17 PM Chairman Patten closed the public hearing.

Additional written testimony:

John Bradley provided written testimony #18992.

9:17 PM Chairman Patten closed the meeting.

Rick Schuchard, Committee Clerk

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

SB 2297
2/9/2023

A bill relating to a lifetime combination license

10:20 AM Chairman Patten opened the meeting.

Chairman Patten and Senators Kessel, Kannianen, Boehm, Beard and Magrum are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

10:22 AM Senator Kannianen moved to adopt proposed amendments LC 23.0934.01001, #20324, 20325. Senator Boehm seconded the motion.

10:22 AM Roll call vote was taken.

Senators	Vote
Senator Dale Patten	Y
Senator Jeffery J. Magrum	Y
Senator Todd Beard	Y
Senator Keith Boehm	Y
Senator Jordan L. Kannianen	Y
Senator Greg Kessel	Y

Motion passes 6-0-0.

10:23 AM Senator Boehm moved to Do Pass the bill as amended. Motion is seconded by Senator Beard.

10:23 AM Roll call vote is taken.

Senators	Vote
Senator Dale Patten	Y
Senator Jeffery J. Magrum	Y
Senator Todd Beard	Y
Senator Keith Boehm	Y
Senator Jordan L. Kannianen	Y
Senator Greg Kessel	Y

Motion passes 6-0-0.

Senator Kannianen will carry the bill.

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
SB 2297
02/09/23
Page 2

This bill does not affect workforce safety.

10:24 AM Chairman Patten closed the meeting.

Rick Schuchard, Committee Clerk

February 3, 2023

AGS
2-9-23
(1-1)

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL NO. 2297

Page 1, line 1, after "Act" insert "to"

Page 1, line 6, overstrike "dedication to teaching firearm hunter safety,"

Page 1, overstrike line 7

Page 1, line 8, overstrike "section 20.1-03-11.1 to"

Page 1, line 8, overstrike "certified hunter education volunteer instructors."

Page 1, line 9, remove "An eligible individual"

Page 1, line 9, overstrike "must have served as a lead or assistant certified"

Page 1, overstrike lines 10 and 11

Page 1, line 12, overstrike "signed by the director and the person receiving the license. The"
and insert immediately thereafter "the dedication of certified game and fish
department volunteer instructors:

- a. A complimentary resident certificate and combination license to resident instructors, provided under section 20.1-03-11.1; or
- b. A complimentary composite of nonresident licenses to include a certificate, fishing license, general game and habitat license, small game license, statewide waterfowl license, spring white goose license, furbearer and nongame license, and a reciprocal trapping license to nonresident instructors.

Any license issued under this subsection is valid for the lifetime of the instructor. An individual is eligible for a license under this subsection if the individual has served and maintained an active status as a certified volunteer instructor in the state for thirty years. Any"

Page 1, line 12, after the second "license" insert "issued under this subsection"

Renumber accordingly

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2297: Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Sen. Patten, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2297 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

Page 1, line 1, after "Act" insert "to"

Page 1, line 6, overstrike "dedication to teaching firearm hunter safety,"

Page 1, overstrike line 7

Page 1, line 8, overstrike "section 20.1-03-11.1 to"

Page 1, line 8, overstrike "certified hunter education volunteer instructors."

Page 1, line 9, remove "An eligible individual"

Page 1, line 9, overstrike "must have served as a lead or assistant certified"

Page 1, overstrike lines 10 and 11

Page 1, line 12, overstrike "signed by the director and the person receiving the license. The" and insert immediately thereafter "the dedication of certified game and fish department volunteer instructors:

- a. A complimentary resident certificate and combination license to resident instructors, provided under section 20.1-03-11.1; or
- b. A complimentary composite of nonresident licenses to include a certificate, fishing license, general game and habitat license, small game license, statewide waterfowl license, spring white goose license, furbearer and nongame license, and a reciprocal trapping license to nonresident instructors.

Any license issued under this subsection is valid for the lifetime of the instructor. An individual is eligible for a license under this subsection if the individual has served and maintained an active status as a certified volunteer instructor in the state for thirty years. Any"

Page 1, line 12, after the second "license" insert "issued under this subsection"

Renumber accordingly

2023 HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SB 2297

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2297
3/10/2023

Relating to a lifetime combination license.

9:00 AM

Chairman Porter opened the hearing. Members present: Chairman Porter, Vice Chairman D. Anderson, Representatives Bosch, Conmy, Dockter, Hagert, Heinert, Ista, Kasper, Marschall, Novak, Olson, Roers Jones. Absent: Representative Ruby.

Discussion Topics:

- Service awards
- Residents and Nonresidents
- ND G&F
- Emergency clause
- Volunteer instructors

Sen Kannianen, District 4, introduced SB 2297, oral testimony
Greg Link, Chief of Conservation and Communications, ND G&F, Testimony 23530
John Bradley, Executive Director, ND Wildlife Federation, Testimony 22996

Additional written testimony:

Robert Matthews, Testimony 23589

9:14 AM Chairman Porter closed the hearing.

Kathleen Davis, Committee Clerk

2023 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2297
3/10/2023

Relating to a lifetime combination license.

10:10 AM

Chairman Porter opened the meeting. Members present: Chairman Porter, Vice Chairman D. Anderson, Representatives Bosch, Conmy, Dockter, Hagert, Heinert, Ista, Kasper, Marschall, Novak, Olson, and Roers Jones. Absent: Representative Ruby.

Discussion Topics:

- Committee action

Rep Olson moved to amend to add an Emergency Clause on SB 2297, seconded by Rep Dockter. Voice vote, motion carried.

Rep Olson moved a Do Pass as Amended, seconded by Rep Roers Jones.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Dick Anderson	Y
Representative Glenn Bosch	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative Jason Dockter	Y
Representative Jared Hagert	Y
Representative Pat D. Heinert	Y
Representative Zachary Ista	Y
Representative Jim Kasper	Y
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Anna S. Novak	AB
Representative Jeremy Olson	Y
Representative Shannon Roers Jones	Y
Representative Matthew Ruby	AB

12-0-2 Motion carried. Rep Olson is carrier.

10:12 AM Meeting adjourned.

Kathleen Davis, Committee Clerk

March 10, 2023

DR
41
3-10-2023

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2297

Page 1, line 2, after "license" insert "; and to declare an emergency"

Page 2, after line 2, insert:

"SECTION 2. EMERGENCY. This Act is declared to be an emergency measure."

Renumber accordingly

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2297, as engrossed: Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Rep. Porter, Chairman) recommends AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS and when so amended, recommends DO PASS (12 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed SB 2297 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 2, after "license" insert "; and to declare an emergency"

Page 2, after line 2, insert:

"SECTION 2. EMERGENCY. This Act is declared to be an emergency measure."

Re-number accordingly

TESTIMONY

SB 2297



Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Testimony on SB 2297

North Dakota Game and Fish Department
Greg Link, Conservation and Communications Division Chief
February 3, 2023

Chairman Patten and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Greg Link. I serve as the Chief of the Conservation and Communications Division for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (Department). I am providing testimony in support of the overall intent of SB 2297, but also proposing amended language for your consideration.

The successful delivery of the Department's education programs relies heavily on the service contribution of its corps of over 800 active volunteer instructors. We greatly appreciate and give high regard to their generosity and dedication. As a means of acknowledging and showing our gratitude and support for their contribution, the Department provides service awards to instructors who have reached a certain benchmark of volunteer years and hours of instruction, as follows:

- 2 years (50 hrs) = Vest
- 5 years (125 hrs) = Jacket
- 10 years (250 hrs) = Plaque
- 15 years (375 hrs) = Knife
- 20 years (500 hrs) = Binoculars
- 25 years (625 hrs) = Gun
- 30 years (750 hrs) = Lifetime Hunting and Fishing License [*as per NDCC Sec.20.1-02-05 (25)*]

As you can see, our 30-year service award is tied directly to the subsection of statute we are discussing today, first established in 2001. Unfortunately, nobody could foresee, at that time, the implications of limiting this service award to only resident instructors.

The dilemma created by this limitation first came to our attention about 5 years ago when a long-serving volunteer instructor for our program and his local communities in North Dakota had achieved the 30-year service benchmark. Because he resided just across our border and claimed residency in a neighboring state, he could not qualify nor receive this award, as a non-resident. Since that time, we've had other nonresident volunteers, serving our Department and our state,

achieve the 30-year service benchmark and face this same predicament. Based on our records, seven volunteers have run into this dilemma; two of which have continued to purchase nonresident licenses in order to hunt and fish in our state. Recognize, this situation will continue to manifest as more volunteer instructors, currently residing out-of-state or eventually moving out-of-state, achieve 30 years of service. Therefore, we fully agree it is time to address this unintended consequence of the original statute language.

That being said, there are several other pieces of original language that have the potential to cause similar unintended consequences. Therefore, we would like to propose and discuss the following amendments to address those issues in one fell swoop.

1. In Lines 6, 8, and 10 of this bill, the references to “firearms hunter safety” and “hunter education” narrow this service award provision to only one of many Department education programs which are taught or facilitated by our volunteer instructors. Our certified game and fish department volunteer instructors may teach one or more of a wide spectrum of Department education courses, not just Hunter Education. In addition to Hunter Education, these outdoor education programs include Hooked On Fishing, Fur Harvester Education, Archery Education, and Boat and Water Safety Education. Regardless of the education program(s) taught, all volunteer instructors should be entitled to the volunteer recognition awards, including the 30-year award.
2. In Lines 7 and 11, references to “lifetime resident certificates and combination licenses” and “lifetime combination license” are incorrect and inappropriate. In our state, we do not offer a “lifetime certificate” nor a “lifetime combination license”. We have met and upheld the intent of this original language through the years by providing qualifying instructors with complimentary certificates and combination licenses at no cost for their lifetime. When they are obtaining their licenses, our computer licensing system recognizes and acknowledges this qualification and provides the individual with those respective licenses free-of-charge. We would like to see this clarification addressed in any amendments, as a clean-up.

Also, state law, as per NDCC Sec.20.1-02-05 (25), does not provide a “combination license” for nonresidents; only residents. The combination license for residents includes fishing, general game and habitat, small game and furbearer licenses. To provide a non-resident with the equivalent licenses and comparable hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities to those contained in the combination license for residents, we would need to provide them and explicitly spell out in statute the appropriate composite of complementary nonresident licenses they would receive (i.e. fishing license, general game and habitat license, small game license, statewide waterfowl license, spring white goose license, furbearer and nongame, and reciprocal trapping license).

Also, recognize that as nonresidents, qualifying instructors cannot receive “resident certificates and combination licenses” as directed in Line 7. Most states do not allow for individuals to possess a resident license in their state if the individual possess a resident license in another. This necessitates providing qualifying nonresident instructors with complimentary nonresident licenses comparable to those of a qualifying resident instructor, as specified above.

Recognize, when doing so, the cost value of the complimentary nonresident licenses will far exceed the cost or complimentary value of a resident certificate. The complimentary value of a resident certificate (\$1) and combination license (\$52) totals \$53; whereas, the cost or complimentary value of a nonresident certificate (\$2), fishing (\$48), general game and habitat (\$20), small game (\$100), statewide waterfowl (\$153), spring white goose (\$50), furbearer/nongame licenses (\$40), and reciprocal trapping (\$350) totals \$763.

It is also important to note that as we’re proposing to provide non-resident instructors with these complimentary licenses, it is our understanding we would still be subjecting them to the nonresident season restrictions, such as the 14-consecutive-day or two 7-consecutive-day license periods for hunting small game and waterfowl, etc.

3. Lastly, in Line, using qualifying metrics such as “must have served as a lead or assistant” and “for a minimum of one course” are no longer appropriate. Several of our education programs, such as Hooked On Fishing do not consist of courses, but rather, events. Therefore, changing the language referring to “an eligible individual as a lead or assistant” serving “in this state for a minimum of one course in each of thirty years.” should be modified to “served and maintained their active status as a certified instructor in this state for thirty years.”

In closing, in an effort to support and meet the intent of SB 2297, yet provide clarity, accuracy, and address all potential unintended consequences of the current bill language, as outlined above, we respectfully propose the following draft language:

A BILL for an Act amend and reenact subsection 25 of section 20.1-02-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to a lifetime combination license.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. Subsection 25 of section 20.1-02-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

- 25) Issue, as a means of rewarding the dedication of certified game and fish department volunteer instructors:

- a) a complimentary resident certificate and combination license provided under section 20.1-03-11.1 to resident instructors, or
- b) a complimentary composite of nonresident licenses to include: certificate, fishing license, general game and habitat license, small game license, statewide waterfowl license, spring white goose license, furbearer and nongame, and reciprocal trapping license to nonresident instructors,
for the lifetime of the instructor. An eligible individual must have served and maintained their active status as a certified volunteer instructor in this state for thirty years. The license must be revoked by the director if the license-holder is convicted of a felony or found to have violated any provision of this title.

Thank you, Chairman Patten and Committee Member, for your time and consideration of this testimony and suggested amendments.



NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

**TESTIMONY OF JOHN BRADLEY
NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION
SENATE BILL 2297
SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 3, 2023**

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. I'm here today representing our thousands of members in 15 affiliated wildlife and sportsmen's clubs across North Dakota that make up the North Dakota Wildlife Federation.

NDWF supports HB 2297. In a time when ND Game & Fish is struggling to recruit new volunteers and Hunter Ed instructors, we should be doing everything we can to support and recognize those who have spent years dedicated to helping the next generation get involved in the outdoors.

One of the NDWF's affiliates, North Dakota Hunter Education Instructors support this bill, but would like to see Hunter Education Instructor expanded to all North Dakota Game and Fish volunteers who have reached 30 years of service. A few examples of these other volunteers would be Fur Harvester Education instructors, Hooked on Fishing instructors, and Boat and Water Safety instructors.

The North Dakota Wildlife Federation urges a Do Pass on SB 2297.

23.0934.01001
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for
Senator Kannianen
February 3, 2023

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL NO. 2297

Page 1, line 1, after "Act" insert "to"

Page 1, line 6, overstrike "dedication to teaching firearm hunter safety,"

Page 1, overstrike line 7

Page 1, line 8, overstrike "section 20.1-03-11.1 to"

Page 1, line 8, overstrike "certified hunter education volunteer instructors."

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Page 1, line 9, overstrike "must have served as a lead or assistant certified"

Page 1, overstrike lines 10 and 11

Page 1, line 12, overstrike "signed by the director and the person receiving the license. The"
and insert immediately thereafter "the dedication of certified game and fish
department volunteer instructors:

- a. A complimentary resident certificate and combination license to
resident instructors, provided under section 20.1-03-11.1; or
- b. A complimentary composite of nonresident licenses to include a
certificate, fishing license, general game and habitat license, small
game license, statewide waterfowl license, spring white goose license,
furbearer and nongame license, and a reciprocal trapping license to
nonresident instructors.

Any license issued under this subsection is valid for the lifetime of the
instructor. An individual is eligible for a license under this subsection if the
individual has served and maintained an active status as a certified
volunteer instructor in the state for thirty years. Any"

Page 1, line 12, after the second "license" insert "issued under this subsection"

Renumber accordingly

23.0934.01001

Sixty-eighth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

SENATE BILL NO. 2297

Introduced by

Senators Kannianen, Beard

Representatives D. Anderson, J. Olson

1 | A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact subsection 25 of section 20.1-02-05 of the North
2 | Dakota Century Code, relating to a lifetime combination license.

3 | **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

4 | **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Subsection 25 of section 20.1-02-05 of the North Dakota
5 | Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

6 | 25. Issue, as a means of rewarding ~~dedication to teaching firearm hunter safety,~~
7 | ~~complimentary lifetime resident certificates and combination licenses provided under~~
8 | ~~section 20.1-03-11.1 to resident certified hunter education volunteer instructors.~~
9 | ~~Eligible persons~~An eligible individual must have served as a lead or assistant certified
10 | ~~hunter education volunteer instructor in this state for a minimum of one course in each~~
11 | ~~of thirty years. The license is known as the "lifetime combination license" and must be~~
12 | ~~signed by the director and the person receiving the license.~~The dedication of
13 | certified game and fish department volunteer instructors:

14 | a. A complimentary resident certificate and combination license to resident
15 | instructors, provided under section 20.1-03-11.1; or

16 | b. A complimentary composite of nonresident licenses to include a certificate,
17 | fishing license, general game and habitat license, small game license, statewide
18 | waterfowl license, spring white goose license, furbearer and nongame license,
19 | and a reciprocal trapping license to nonresident instructors.

20 | Any license issued under this subsection is valid for the lifetime of the instructor. An
21 | individual is eligible for a license under this subsection if the individual has served and
22 | maintained an active status as a certified volunteer instructor in the state for thirty
23 | years. Any license issued under this subsection must be revoked by the director if the

Sixty-eighth
Legislative Assembly

1 licenseholder is convicted of a felony or found to have violated any provision of this
2 title.



NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

**TESTIMONY OF JOHN BRADLEY
NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION
SENATE BILL 2297
HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MARCH 10, 2023**

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resource Committee:

For the record, I am John Bradley, Executive Director of the North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF). I'm here today representing our 1,500 members in 15 affiliated wildlife and sportsmen's clubs across North Dakota that make up the North Dakota Wildlife Federation.

NDWF supports HB 2297. In a time when North Dakota Game & Fish is struggling to recruit new volunteers and Hunter Ed instructors, we should be doing everything we can to support, recognize, and retain those who have spent years dedicated to helping the next generation get involved in the outdoors.

One of the NDWF's affiliates, North Dakota Hunter Education Instructors Association supports this bill. They advocated to include all North Dakota Game and Fish volunteers who have reached 30 years of service, instead of just hunter education instructors, as the bill was introduced. A few examples of these other volunteers would be Fur Harvester Education instructors, Hooked on Fishing instructors, and Boat and Water Safety instructors. The Senate made that requested change before passing the bill.

The North Dakota Wildlife Federation urges a Do Pass on SB 2297



House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Testimony on SB 2297

North Dakota Game and Fish Department
Greg Link, Conservation and Communications Division Chief
March 10, 2023

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Greg Link. I serve as the Chief of the Conservation and Communications Division for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (Department). I am providing testimony in support of SB 2297.

The successful delivery of the Department's education programs relies heavily on the service contribution of its corps of over 800 active volunteer instructors. We greatly appreciate and give high regard to their generosity and dedication. As a means of acknowledging and showing our gratitude and support for their contribution, the Department provides service awards to instructors who have reached a certain benchmark of volunteer years and hours of instruction, as follows:

- 2 years (50 hrs) = Vest
- 5 years (125 hrs) = Jacket
- 10 years (250 hrs) = Plaque
- 15 years (375 hrs) = Knife
- 20 years (500 hrs) = Binoculars
- 25 years (625 hrs) = Gun
- 30 years (750 hrs) = Lifetime Hunting and Fishing License [*as per NDCC Sec.20.1-02-05 (25)*]

As you can see, our 30-year service award is tied directly to the subsection of statute we are discussing today, first established in 2001. Unfortunately, nobody could foresee, at that time, the implications of limiting this service award to only resident instructors.

The dilemma created by this limitation first came to our attention about 5 years ago when a long-serving volunteer instructor for our program and his local communities in North Dakota had achieved the 30-year service benchmark. Because he resided just across our border and claimed residency in a neighboring state, he could not qualify nor receive this award, as a non-resident. Since that time, we've had other nonresident volunteers, serving the Department and our state, achieve the 30-year service benchmark and face this same predicament. Based on our records,

seven volunteers have run into this dilemma; two of which have continued to purchase nonresident licenses in order to hunt and fish in our state. Recognize, this situation will continue to manifest as more volunteer instructors, currently residing out-of-state or eventually moving out-of-state, achieve 30 years of service. Therefore, we fully agree it is time to address this unintended consequence of the original statute language.

In addition to broadening this provision to nonresident volunteers, this bill also extends the lifetime license provision to all Department volunteer instructors meeting the 30 years of service, regardless of the education program they've taught. This would include Hooked On Fishing, Fur Harvester Education, Archery Education, and Boat and Water Safety Education, not just Hunter Education.

Also, state law does not provide a "combination license" for nonresidents; only residents. To provide a non-resident with the equivalent licenses and comparable hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities to those provided in the combination license for residents, this bill explicitly spells out in subsection 25(b) the appropriate composite of complementary nonresident licenses a qualifying nonresident volunteer would be entitled to receive (i.e. fishing license, general game and habitat license, small game license, statewide waterfowl license, spring white goose license, furbearer and nongame, and reciprocal trapping license).

While this bill would provide non-resident instructors with a complimentary set of the licenses, as specified, it is our understanding we would still be subjecting them to the nonresident season restrictions, such as the 14-consecutive-day or two 7-consecutive-day license periods for hunting small game and waterfowl, etc.

In closing, for the reasons I've outlined above, the Department SUPPORTS and respectfully asks for a DO PASS on the SB 2297.

Thank you, Chairman Porter and Committee Members, for your time and consideration of this testimony.



Attn: House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Re: Senate Bill 2297
Date: March 7, 2023
Position: Recommend Amendments

Honorable Members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I respectfully urge you to consider amending North Dakota Senate Bill 2297 (SB 2297) which would provide long term volunteers of North Dakota's Fish and Game Department (NDFG) a free lifetime combination hunting and fishing license. While CSF agrees that these volunteers should be recognized for their long-term commitment and dedication to NDFG, SB 2297, as written, carries potential negative impacts as it relates to the American System of Conservation Funding (ASCF) that must be considered.

Founded in 1989, CSF is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

Funded by the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and permits, along with revenue generated from self-imposed excise taxes through the Pittman-Robertson Act and Dingell-Johnson Act with Wallop-Breaux Amendments, the ASCF serves as the primary source of revenue for NDFG. While the implications of discounting or providing a no-cost license on overall license revenue are obvious, what is less known is the impact of these discounts on the ability of NDFG to fully claim their portion of revenue made available through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration (Pittman-Robertson) and Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration (Dingell-Johnson) Acts. In making apportionments of Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service uses a formula¹ that, in part, considers the number of eligible hunting (Pittman-Robertson) and fishing (Dingell-Johnson) licenses sold. To be counted, licenses not only need to be obtained by each hunter or angler, but must also result in revenue collected by the state fish and

¹ Congressional Research Service. April 5, 2019. Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act: Understanding Apportionments for States and Territories. Accessed: January 19, 2023. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R45667.pdf>

Your Inside Connection to Outdoor Legislation

wildlife management agency (i.e., NDFG). In turn, each certified hunting license results in, approximately, an additional \$26 and each fishing license brings in \$10 of federal aid.²

While CSF understands the desire to provide benefits for certain groups, we respectfully ask the Committee to consider amending SB 2297 to also include specific language that creates a reimbursement to NDFG from the general fund for any license or permit revenue forgone as a result of this and any other free or discounted license or permit provided by the legislature going forward. In so doing, the legislature will retain the opportunity to provide these incentives or rewards to deserving demographics without unduly threatening the ability of NDFG to receive the funding necessary to continue its work managing North Dakota's public trust fish and wildlife resources for the benefit of all North Dakotans. Examples of this framework are already in other states for where discounts are granted by the legislature. Given NDFG's almost complete reliance on the ASCF, we believe that these amendments would be a valuable addition in the Peace Garden State.

To conclude, CSF recognizes the years of dedication demonstrated by those who have so selflessly volunteered with the NDFG. However, we maintain that no-cost licenses carry potential negative impacts for the agency that these volunteers have sought to support. Should the legislature determine that the issuance of no-cost licenses to these volunteers, or any other demographic, be necessary, we recommend amending SB 2297 to include the aforementioned reimbursement language to ensure that the integrity of the ASCF is maintained. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this issue. Should you require additional information on this, or other sportsmen-related topics, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,



Robert Matthews

Senior Coordinator, Great Lakes States

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

rmatthews@congressionalsportsmen.org | 517-210-2890

² Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. 2023. Reimbursement to Fish and Wildlife Agencies for Free and Discounted Licenses. Accessed: January 19, 2023. <https://congressionalsportsmen.org/policies/state/reimbursement-to-fish-and-wildlife-agencies-for-free-and-discounted-license>