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2001 HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES

HB 1333

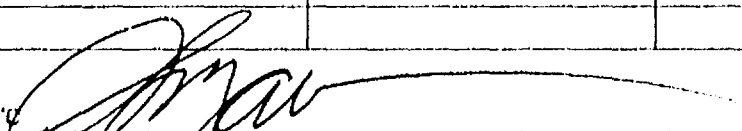
2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1333

House Natural Resources Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date February 2, 2001

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
2	x		50 to 3600
Committee Clerk Signature 			

Minutes:

Chairman Earl Rennerfeldt, Vice Chair Jon O. Nelson, Rep. Brokke, Rep. DeKrey, Rep. Droydal, Rep. Galvin, Rep. Keiser, Rep. Klein, Rep. Nottestad, Rep. Porter, Rep. Weiler, Rep. Hanson, Rep. Kelsh, Rep. Solberg, Rep. Winrich.

Chairman Rennerfeldt: I will open the hearing on HB 1333.

Vice Chair Nelson: I come to you today in support of HB 1333. It is ironic in a sense that we do so much in this state to try and develop economic development. Earlier this week at the GNDA supper, we talked about the new economy in this state. I agree with some of the principles of that and we do need economic stimulation in this state to create an environment for more people to make decent livings. But we certainly cannot forget the old economy as well, in my part of the state waterfowl hunting is a big part of that. I don't distinguish between resident and non resident as much as you may have heard. I have seen great relationships being built from residents as well

as non residents. I have also seen problems. I don't distinguish the difference there either. I do know one thing, I know that during the month of October, in that part of the state, the economic viability of the businesses are enhanced. The people here to testify for the bill today are a good cross section of people from the county government, political subdivisions, the business world and from the economic development a part of the region. This bill simply allows that zone 1 would be open to water fowl hunting all season for non residents as well as residents. Businesses in my area depend on that. This is vital to the existence of many of the businesses in that part of the region. I think that this is what we are asking for. There are some problems that certain areas have and this is one area where we may see life a little differently than other parts of the state. I certainly want to create a less restrictive environment to the non residents that come to the area. There are positives and there are negatives. We think that in our part of the state, we do not see a lack of numbers of ducks. I would only invite them up to our area and hunt.

Chairman Rennerfeldt: Basically what you are saying in this bill is that you put no numbers on this, but allow non residents to hunt the entire season?

Vice Chair Nelson: As this bill reads right now, that would be the case. I don't propose a cap on numbers, but the non negotiable item in my mind is that they have the entire season to hunt.

Rep. Hanson: Do you have a leasing problem by guides in your area?

Vice Chair Nelson: There is some leasing going on.. I know of one guide from Devils Lake that leases some land.

Rep. Hanson: So, it's not a problem?

Vice Chair Nelson: In discussing with the individual that leases, he allows the local people to hunt when he is not guiding a client.

Rep. Hanson: How about non resident leasing?

Vice Chair Nelson: I know of none.

Rep. Hanson: There is a law put in by Sen. Nething, basically for goose hunting which was a problem. Now we are into the duck problem ... I think we can compromise.

Rep. Porter: How long is hunting viable in what you have outlined as zone 1?

Vice Chair Nelson: I think it changes from year to year with weather, but during the last four years, until the first freeze up or snow storm. The best goose hunting has occurred during the first week in November. One of the reason behind this, is that people that come to this state have said if they had the opportunity to return later in the season, they would.

Rep. Porter: When you look at opening one area up to the entire season for non residents, did you give any consideration to increasing the fees for that license, because it is 3 to 4 times the hunting than what the rest of the state is?

Vice Chair Nelson: No, I did not. We offer incentives to come to ND to do business. If the business climate in Fargo has more to offer than Welford, I don't think we put that on a scale and try to balance it. So in this respect, I don't think we should do anything to unbalance the scale on the other side of the coin.

Rep. Porter: One of the problems we keep hearing is one of access. When you look at more and more people coming in and taking up the access, you need to provide Game and Fish more resources to get more PLOTS lands going and get more access out there. How are we supposed to get access for both residents and non residents?

Vice Chair Nelson: I couldn't agree with you more on that. I am a strong component of the PLOTS program. I would do whatever I can to increase that. I think that 25,000 non residents licenses do exactly that. If we put a cap on that, our licenses numbers have been rather stable last

year, the increase has been in non resident numbers. This gives money to Dean's department to increase those PLOTS acres. Unfortunately we haven't seen too many in the water fowl area.

Rep. Froseth - District 6: I am from Kenmare the snow goose capitol of North Dakota. The hunting is very prevalent in our area. I signed on to this bill with Rep. Nelson and Rep. Hunsker has some amendments that make it a much better bill, I totally support the amendments. It opens the area from Highway 83 west to the Montana line. That would include my area and the great hunting opportunities from my area west. With the numbers of water fowl coming down, especially the snow geese, I think it is essential at this time to harvest as many of those as we can. The numbers are there. I believe an extension of the hunting season for non residents would be desirable. I am a small business man and we recognize the impact that water fowl hunting has in our area. In fact, if it wasn't for that impact, I am sure there are several businesses that would have trouble making it through the season. We have out of state people buying old homes and fixing them up and spending time in our community. We are glad to see them come. The economic impact is great. I support this bill and especially support the amendments Rep. Hunkster has.

Rep. Bob Hunkster - District 6: (See written testimony).

Rep. Dennis Johnson - District 12: I am right in the middle of Rep. Nelson's proposed area. I was anxious to sign on to this legislation. The high water in this area now has resulted in a great number of ducks and geese nesting in this area. These out of state hunters that come in there now own houses in this area, they contribute to fundraisers and are making an effort to being part of the community. It is common to hear from these folks that they would like to be here a little longer. That is why I support this legislation.

Sen. Mike Every - District 12: I stand here before you to support this bill. I truly see it as an economic development bill. Our region is so impacted by the economics of hunting and fishing I couldn't even describe it all. I want to tell you for a small town of Minnewauken about the economic impact. In the last year we have along our flooded highway opened up a motel, one of the nicest boat landings in the state, a convenience store. This is the same town that Rep. Johnson was talking about with the elevator and a bar. We truly support this bill. The tourism and economics of these things have an economic impact of from 50-75 million to this state. I think we should support any economic development that we see. There are some issues with non residents. In our region I have never had a problem finding a place to hunt, we think it is well controlled. This bill is a nice compromise to the folks opposed to the non residents coming in. I urge a Do Pass and support the bill.

Randy Frost - Devils Lake Chamber of Commerce: It is important for our local economy to have the voice of our business community speak. I do represent approximately 300 members and many small community businesses that surround us. One of the things we believe in is balance. We took a look at HB 1269 and they have some real concerns about how many water fowl hunters are in their region. I would mirror what Sen. Every said about how this might draw some of them away from their particular regions. I also want to talk about some numbers we are hearing. We keep hearing about the 22-23,000 water fowl hunters that come in, that is accurate. What we don't hear is that there are only about 39-40,000 resident water fowl hunters in the state of North Dakota. From 1975 through 1980 there was just under 73,000. That is about 12,000 hunters less. After that the water dropped down. The numbers from the out of state water fowl hunters stayed almost the same. They didn't change, they wanted to be here. But the North Dakota hunters dropped down to a low of 22,000 in 1992. Water came back into the area, our

non resident water fowl hunters has continued to rise, the North Dakota water fowl hunters have not. We no longer have the farmers living here in the '70s. They are living in Bismarek, Fargo and Minneapolis. We need to be able to have a viable community. I listened to the testimony of the restaurant owner who lives here in Bismarek, he has this session to base his economy on, he has the mall, the civic center. Same thing with people who own restaurants in Fargo, we don't have that in Cando, Devils Lake. We have to depend on what we have there. In our promotion of resident water fowl hunters, we have tried to draw people to the state of ND from Minnesota and Wisconsin to hunt a little differently than they do in the state. We push very hard for open water hunting. Vast majority of ND water fowl hunters do not hunt that way.

Bob Schmidt: I have been doing business and hunting around this area for 25 years. I believe if you didn't have that fourteen day period it would be less concentrated. They come all the first week for ducks. Then they pick the next seven days which is normally teachers convention weekend. If the weather is bad as it has been the past several years, they can't come back. I think they would spread out farther, in November there is no one hunting. We nose dive 80% in sales. The week that all the geese were here, we had no body. There are a lot less local hunters in the Cramer area, and you might blame it on the out of state hunters, but it is just less young people around. Even deer hunting has gone down. My main concern is to spread it out. The motels are full, no one else can come, so why limit licenses.

Paul Becker - ND Farm Bureau: (See written testimony).

Ken Teubner - Towner County Commissioner: I see it from both sides, the economic impact in the fall, the ducks move in and clean out 80 acres and it is quite an economic loss in that area. Rep. Johnson talked about people buying houses in our town, we get some returns back from those house and no else is going to buy those homes. It is a benefit to us. The business places in

town pick up from there, he has keys for 8 or 9 house and they check the house and get things ready for the hunters. It is an impact for him, he picks up some dollars from this. I haven't heard a lot of talk about the farmer himself. The farmer owns the land, sometimes you wonder when you talk about bills like this, whose land is it that they guys are hunting on? I think we need to respect the people out on the land, we don't have a problem with people coming on our land to hunt. As far as I know we don't have any contracts for anyone to hunt the whole season in the area. I really urge your support for this HB 1333. I think it is an excellent bill.

Chairman Rennerfeldt: Is there anyone here in opposition to HB 1333?

Mike Donahue - N:WF & USND: We oppose HB 1333 because of setting up Zone 1 for non residents being able to hunt the entire season in that zone. We have had discussion on previous history on non resident competition and the perceptions of leasing grounds by corporations which forces the residents away because he can't have access. That may have affected the numbers that some folks have been discouraged. We object to Zone 1 being open all season, we think that will create a real access problem over time.

Todd Anderson: I am opposed to this bill as a economic development bill. I am opposed for two reasons. Number 1 is essentially attempting to treat parts of the state differently than other parts of the state that have an equal interest in economic development. Secondly from a personal standpoint I think that if in fact there is an under-utilization of resources in the Devils Lake basin or other areas of the state, that can be addressed by increasing the number of non resident licenses that are available, or alternatively allowing the 7 and 14 days to be more flexible in their usage, to deal with the fickleness of the snow geese and their migratory patterns. I think that would be a better way to handle the problems that some of the non resident hunters have with respect to that.

Orlan Mertz: I am opposed to this bill. Again this line that goes by highway 200 cuts my place in half. I am opposed to that.

Vice Chair Nelson: Shouldn't you at least be half happy about this bill?

Mertz: It is just the impact of non residents not staying at my place coming across the line to hunt in our area.

Rep. Hanson: South Dakota has a ten day pheasant season and you can get a license for five days and you can come back the second time and put the date in, do we have that now, or can we do that?

Paul Schadewald - ND Game and Fish Department: The system we have now is not exactly like that but there are two 7 day periods for water fowl hunters, but we are quite flexible. They can set their dates when they buy their license, but they can call our 800 number if they need to change it. They can change their dates anytime before the 7 day period starts.

Chairman Rennerfeldt: If there is no further opposition I will close the hearing on HB 1333.

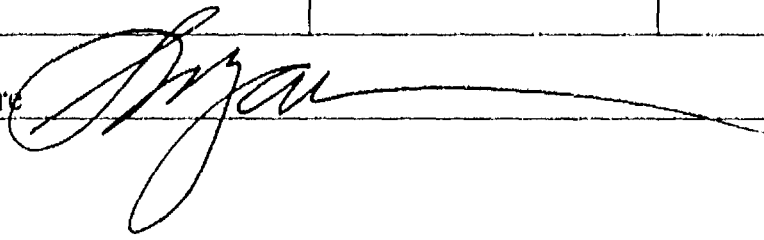
2001 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1333

House Natural Resources Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date February 15, 2001

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
2	x		1 to 333
Committee Clerk Signature 			

Minutes:

Chairman Earl Rennerfeldt, Vice Chair Jon O. Nelson, Rep. Brekke, Rep. DeKrey, Rep. Droydal, Rep. Galvin, Rep. Keiser, Rep. Klein, Rep. Nottestad, Rep. Porter, Rep. Weiler, Rep. Hanson, Rep. Kelsh, Rep. Winrich.

Chairman Rennerfeldt: Okay, HB 1333.

Vice Chair Nelson: I move a Do Not Pass.

Chairman Rennerfeldt: I second that. Any further discussion on this bill?

Vice Chair Nelson: With the Do Pass on 1269, 1333 is no longer needed. This was the one we decided to let go of in the negotiations.

(some discussion).

Chairman Rennerfeldt: Is there any further discussion on HB 1333? We have a Do Not Pass. Call the roll.

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House Natural Resources Committee
Bill/Resolution Number HB 1333
Hearing Date February 15, 2001

MOTION FOR A DO NOT PASS

YES, 13 NO, 0

2 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING

CARRIED BY REP. DEKREY

