

# MICROFILM DIVIDER

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DESCRIPTION

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*Diana O'Connell*  
Operator's Signature

10/2/03  
Date

2003 HOUSE FINANCE AND TAXATION

HB 1196

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*Doreen M. G. [Signature]*  
Operator's Signature

10/2/03  
Date

2003 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1196

House Finance and Taxation Committee

Conference Committee

Hearing Date January 20, 2003

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		39.8

Committee Clerk Signature Janice Stein

Minutes:

**REP. WESLEY BELTER, CHAIRMAN** Called the hearing to order.

**REP. GIL HERBEL.** Introduced the bill. This bill removes lines 32 and 33 from the state income tax form. The reason for the removal of these two lines is that the tax form, should be a tax form, and not a fund raising form. He stated he is not opposed to the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts, the Salvation Army and the veterans, the crippled children, the senior citizens, United Way, Red Cross, all of these are great causes. I firmly believe they need a different mechanism to fund their causes. Eventually, if you add more check-offs, you will have requests for more of these organizations. The income tax form should be kept to do your income taxes. Attached, is a copy of the Individual Income Tax Return.

**LARRY KOTCHMAN, STATE FORESTER.** Testified in opposition of the bill. See attached written testimony, plus a handout "Trees for North Dakota".

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Dorinda Ballantyne  
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**REP. FROELICH** How does your program differ or vary from the programs of the Soil Conservation Services, why can't we do it through the Soil Conservation Services and abolish this one?

**LARRY KOTCHMAN** The programs differ in the sense that the forests that are planted, are aimed at communities. There is no other cost share available for that kind of an activity from the Soil Conservation District. In terms of the living snow fence effort, these programs are funded through activities that come from our agency. We do work with the Soil Conservation Districts very closely in the administration of the living snow fence effort. The thing about cost funds that are unique for living snow fences is that there are other programs that help establish living snow fences, but they only fund up to seventy five percent of the cost. These monies are often, additional dollars that go in to a project to bring it up to 100% of the out of pocket costs for a private landowner.

**DEAN HILDEBRAND, DIRECTOR OF THE NORTH DAKOTA GAME & FISH**

**DEPARTMENT.** Testified in opposition of the bill. He reiterated what he testified to in HB 1342. He related to trees which were planted by school kids, who come back years later to find the tree they planted. Most all of those trees come from that check-off program. They hire young people in the spring of the year, to conduct tours through their wildlife sites.

**REP. BELTER** Are you saying, you cannot use any of your internal funds to replace these, from hunting or whatever?

**DEAN HILDEBRAND** Referred to the handout which was submitted to committee members, utilizing federal dollars for nongame species. The federal government is very specific on how we utilize those funds. We have lots of birdwatchers in North Dakota. All of those birdwatching

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clubs and all of those nongame things, I can't give federal dollars to, unless they are earmarked by the federal government. There are certain instances under tree planting, where I can use those types of funds.

**REP. BELTER** Did I hear you say, that if this bill wasn't passed, you would probably be able to find the funds?

**DEAN HILDEBRAND** I am going to try to plant as many trees as I can.

**REP. BELTER** What about the Watchable Wildlife?

**DEAN HILDEBRAND** Under Watchable Wildlife, it depends upon how it is placed. If something is being placed in an outdoor wildlife learning site, I will have to scramble.

**REP. WINRICH** Rep. Herbel in his presentation, talked about support of a number of private nonprofit organizations thrown in and saying the tax form should be simplified, do the funds that go to the watchable wildlife program support any such private nonprofits?

**LARRY KOTCHMAN** Answered the question. No, they do not, they come exclusively, to save forests.

**REP. SCHMIDT** Through the tree fund, you couldn't even if you wanted to, by law, you could not give the senior citizens any funding out of your budget?

**DEAN HILDEBRAND** No

**REP. SCHMIDT** Is that a federal law?

**DEAN HILDEBRAND** No, it is a state law. I couldn't take X number of dollars out of my budget and give it to the Silver-Haired Association.

**REP. SCHMIDT** Maybe we need to make a law to do that.

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**REP. FROELICH** Do you have any place on the hunting and fishing licenses, right now, where you have a voluntary check-off for fifty cents or one dollar, for any of these programs we discussed?

**DEAN HILDEBRAND** No

**REP. FROELICH** Asked if it had ever been considered.

**DEAN HILDEBRAND** There have been a lot of things considered. Some people say you should have a check-off, to be able to increase habitat funding, and some people say you should have a check-off for almost everything. A lot of the licenses are being sold electronically, right now. Anything is possible.

**BILL PFEIFER, WILDLIFE SOCIETY.** Testified in opposition of the bill. He stated these funds have stood the test of time for ten plus years. Apparently, they are satisfactory to the folks who are using them, and certainly to the organizations who are receiving them. There is no appropriation of state and general fund money goes into any of this, it is only a donation situation. Related to a situation which happened about ten years ago, regarding his in-laws and bird watching. This mechanism, for people like that, to show an appreciation, they don't hunt any more, but those folks can show appreciation by this donation.

**MIKE DONAHUE, NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION.** Testified in opposition of the bill.

**KAY POWER, TEACHER IN BISMARCK** Testified in opposition of the bill. She stated there is no better teaching tool than bringing in the outdoors to a classroom. In the eleven years that she has taught, she used the outdoors in her classroom. She stated she has gone to the State Game & Fish for the different publications to use in the classroom, and the students are ecstatic

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about that. If you cut off this funding, you are missing a big portion of the education that goes on. Gave an example of her study of the owls in North Dakota, working in the classroom. She stated they got a lot of coverage on that project in the newspaper.

**RON LUTHE, CITIZEN OF BISMARCK**, Testified in opposition of the bill. He felt the funding that is received from this check-off, is a great benefit for the state.

**JEB WILLIAMS, NORTH DAKOTA GAME & FISH DEPARTMENT** Testified in opposition of the bill. He stated he works extensively with the watchable wildlife program. He state they share the watchable wildlife program with everyone through the popular photo contest. Each year, they produce a promotional poster. This year, there were fifty participants, who sent in over three hundred photographs for the program. It offered a very unique look to the wildlife in North Dakota. This is just one of the areas in which the funding is used. These artists are then featured in the North Dakota Outdoors Magazine. It has been a very positive approach.

**REP. BELTER** Asked if all of the publications handed out during the hearing, were free publications?

**JEB WILLIAMS** That is correct.

**REP. BELTER** Asked whether there were any paying customers.

**JEB WILLIAMS** Yes, there are about 28,000 subscriptions.

With no further testimony, the hearing was closed.

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