



February 26, 2025

Representative Mike Clampitt
Chairman, House Federal Relations and American Indian Affairs Committee
300 North Salisbury Street, Room 633
Raleigh, NC 27603

Re: House Bill 103; NC Am. Indian Hunting/Fishing Rights

Position: Oppose As Drafted – Encourage Amendments

Dear Chairman Clampitt and Members of House Federal Relations and American Indian Affairs Committee,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, I write to respectfully urge you to amend House Bill 103 which would provide a statewide hunting, fishing, or trapping license exemption for members of an Indian tribe recognized under Chapter 71A of the General Statutes to include a provision that provides the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) with a reimbursement model for free and/or discounted hunting and fishing licenses within the State of North Carolina. Such a reimbursement model would not only solve the loss of conservation funding for this bill, but all discounted and/or free hunting and fishing licenses into the future. While CSF appreciates the intent of this bill, we cannot support this bill in its current form.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (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.

As it currently stands, members of an Indian tribe recognized under Chapter 71A of the General Statutes are not required to purchase a license to hunt, fish, or trap on tribal land. In addition, any landowner, their spouse, or their dependents under 18 years of age are exempt from having to purchase a license to hunt, fish, or trap their own property.

Your Inside Connection to Outdoor Legislation

While this bill is likely well-intentioned, the provision of statewide hunting, fishing, or trapping license exemptions would have a direct negative impact on conservation funding in North Carolina. In 2024, the NCWRC had 7,378 American Indian or Alaskan Native individuals with a hunting and/or fishing license. If each of these individuals chose not to purchase a license under this proposed exemption, it could lead to the loss of over \$450,000 in license revenue and nearly \$1.4 million in matching federal funding for the NCWRC. The “user pays – public benefits” structure of the American System of Conservation Funding (ASCF) relies on revenue from sporting licenses and excise tax revenue from both the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Programs. Excise tax revenues collected from sporting goods are funneled directly back into state conservation programs administered and executed by the NCWRC.

In 2023 alone, North Carolina’s sportsmen and women generated over \$88.7 million for state-based conservation through hunting and fishing license sales and matching Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program funds.¹ This ranks North Carolina 15th nationally in funding received as a result of the ASCF. Legislation to provide free licenses to a large group of citizens would result in a significant negative impact in funding needed for the NCWRC to execute their mission and conduct critical on the ground conservation work.

To compensate for the loss in revenue because of the issuance of free and/or discounted licenses, some states have enacted legislation that reallocates funds from the state general fund to compensate the state fish and wildlife agency for the lost revenue. Tennessee provides a great example of an amendment that could be added to this bill to protect conservation funding to the NCWRC: Tennessee [Title 70, Chapter 2, § 70-2-104](#): “The agency shall be reimbursed for lost revenue resulting from the issuance of free or partially discounted combination hunting and fishing licenses created by statute on or after January 1, 2017, in an amount equal to the discounts received.”²

In closing, CSF understands and appreciates the intent of this bill; however, offering free and discounted licenses limits the ability of the NCWRC to fund their conservation work, which benefits all residents. To protect the integrity of sportsmen-generated dollars through the ASCF, we encourage you to work towards providing statutory protections against lost conservation dollars by amending this legislation to require the NCWRC be reimbursed from the General Fund for any free or discounted license the legislature decides to implement. For these reasons, we ask you to amend House Bill 103, and without such amendments we cannot offer our support at this time.

¹ <https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.congressionalsportsmen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/09204845/South-Carolina-ASCF-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

² [Reimbursement to Fish and Wildlife Agencies for Free and Discounted Licenses](#)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Conner Barker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Conner Barker
Senior Coordinator, Southeastern States
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
cbarker@congressionalsportsmen.org
(202) 984-1995