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U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE PUBLIC MEETING
ON RESIDENT CANADA GOOSE POPULATIONS

3

MAY 15, 2002

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BROOKINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA

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MR. SENG: Good evening. Welcome to tonight's meeting on resident Canada geese management. My name is Phil Seng. I'll be the facilitator for tonight's meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to take public input on the draft Environmental Impact Statement that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has prepared on resident Canada goose overabundance. And I'd like to thank each of you for taking the time out of your schedules to come share your comments with us tonight, especially on such a beautiful evening.

Tonight is the sixth out of eleven meetings that will be held on this issue around the country. We started off on April 1st in Dallas, Texas. From there we went to Palatine, Illinois, which is a suburb of Chicago, then to Waupun, Wisconsin; Franklin, Tennessee. Last night we were in Bloomington, Minnesota. Tonight obviously here in Brookings. From here we go to Richmond, Virginia; Danbury, Connecticut; North Brunswick, New Jersey; Denver, Colorado; and then we finish up on May 30th in Bellevue, Washington.

Before we begin, I'd like to recognize a couple

1 people in the audience. First is Tom Melius.
2 He's the assistant director for migratory
3 birds and state programs with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife
4 Service from the Washington D.C. office. We sure
5 appreciate you being with us, Tom. And Spencer Vaa and
6 George Vandell -- George is in the back -- with the
7 South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Department. So thanks
8 a lot for being with us.

9 The process for the meeting tonight is very
10 straightforward. First, we'll have Ron Kokel, who is a
11 wildlife biologist from the Fish & Wildlife Service --
12 he will give a brief a slide presentation
13 on the draft Environmental Impact Statement, and then
14 we'll go right into taking your comments on the draft
15 EIS.

16 When you came in, you should have gotten a numbered
17 card, and for reasons I won't bore you with, the
18 cards started at 151, so if you've got card 160 and
19 you're afraid you've got to listen to 150 people before
20 you, don't worry about it. It's not that many. We'll
21 just go in order from 151 through however many we gave
22 out. If you don't want to make a public statement but
23 you do want to send comments in, there's a
24 mail address and an e-mail address on the
25 back of this card so if you choose not to come to the

1 mike tonight but you still want to send comments or you
2 think of something after you leave tonight, feel free
3 to send those in. The deadline for comments is May 30,
4 and that's written on here as well. And I would
5 encourage you if you have Internet access to send them
6 by e-mail. As most of you I'm sure are aware, because
7 of the Anthrax issue in Washington D.C., sometimes the
8 regular mail going into D.C. has to go through a
9 separate irradiation process. So it's not as timely as
10 it might otherwise be. So if you have e-mail, you can
11 make sure you get your comments in as soon as you send
12 them.

13 If you do choose to make a public comment tonight,
14 when I call your name, if you would please come to the
15 mike in the center aisle here for a couple of
16 reasons. First, we want to make sure that everyone has
17 a chance to hear what you have to say; and second, we
18 want to make sure that Maxine, our court reporter, can
19 record everything you have to say verbatim. We don't
20 want there to be any issues of us misinterpreting what
21 you have to say. So please do come to the mike.
22 When I call your number, if you don't want
23 to make a public comment, please just say pass so we
24 can move on.

25 When you do come to the mike, if you would state

1 your name and spell it, unless it's immediately obvious
2 how your name is spelled, so we make sure we capture
3 that correctly. If you're representing an organization
4 with your comments, please state what the organization
5 is and please tell us where you're from.

6 Very shortly I'll be sending around a sign-up
7 sheet on a clipboard. If you would please sign it so
8 we know who was here tonight. And there's a couple of
9 check boxes underneath where you sign your name and
10 address; and that is, if you were at the scoping
11 meetings a couple years ago or if you got on our
12 mailing list in some other way and you received a copy
13 of the draft Environmental Impact Statement in the
14 mail, then you're on our mailing list. And you will
15 get a copy of the final one when it is made available.
16 And so just check that box if you fall into that group
17 to make sure we don't send you a duplicate mailing. If
18 you're not on our mailing list and did not receive a
19 copy of the draft EIS in the mail, check the other box
20 and we'll be sure to send you a copy of the final EIS
21 when it comes out.

22 I'd like to point out that the format for
23 tonight's meeting is for us to take input from you.
24 It's not a debate or discussion format so please keep
25 that in mind when you make your comments. And finally,

1 my job as a facilitator is to make sure that everyone
2 has a chance to make their comments and be heard, and
3 so I don't think it will be a problem -- This group isn't
4 that big -- but in case anyone goes too long, I may ask
5 you to wrap up your comments. And I apologize in
6 advance for doing that. I want to make sure that we
7 give everyone a chance to speak.

8 So with that, I'll pass around the sign-up sheet
9 and turn it over to Ron Kokel who will give us a brief
10 overview of the draft Environmental Impact Statement.

11 Ron?

12 MR. KOKEKEL: Thank you, Phil. Good evening
13 everybody. Again, my name's Ron Kokel. I'm with the
14 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Division of Migratory Bird
15 Management, and I'm currently stationed in Arlington,
16 Virginia. And on behalf of our director, Steve
17 Williams, I'd like to welcome all of you to this public
18 meeting.

19 This meeting is the sixth, as Phil already pointed
20 out, of eleven public meetings that are being held
21 across the country for the purpose of inviting public
22 participation and input into our process of developing
23 the Environmental Impact Statement for resident Canada
24 geese management. This draft Environmental Impact
25 Statement was developed in full cooperation with the

1 U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services.

2 Why are we here? Well, we're here to explain
3 what's in the draft, its proposed action, and to listen
4 to your comments. The draft considers a range of
5 management alternatives for addressing expanding
6 populations of locally breeding resident Canada geese,
7 and as such, we're really just here listening to you
8 and invite your comments on what our recommended action
9 is.

10 First, a brief explanation of the National
11 Environmental Policy Act which governs this whole
12 process, or NEPA. NEPA requires completion of an EIS
13 to analyze environmental and socioeconomic impacts that
14 are associated with any federal significant actions.
15 NEPA also requires public involvement which includes a
16 scoping period before the draft, which was when we were
17 here a couple years ago, and a comment period after the
18 draft. We began this process in August of 1999 when we
19 published a notice that announced our intent to prepare
20 this draft Environmental Impact Statement. Then in
21 February of 2000, we held nine public scoping meetings
22 which were designed to get public input into the
23 process. We did hold one here at Brookings. Scoping
24 ended in March of 2000. In response to the scoping, we
25 received over 3,000 comments from the public and over

1 1,250 people attended the nine public meetings.

2 What did we find out with scoping? The top issues
3 that were identified were property damage and conflicts
4 caused by resident Canada geese, the methods of the
5 conflict abatement, sport hunting opportunities on
6 resident geese, the economic impacts caused by resident
7 geese, human health and safety concerns, and the
8 impacts to the Canada geese themselves.

9 NEPA's also very specific in that it outlines a
10 specific format for an EIS. There's a purpose and
11 needs section, an alternatives section, an affected
12 environment section, and environmental consequences
13 section.

14 In the EIS, we define resident Canada geese as
15 those geese that nest within the lower 48 states in the
16 months of March, April, May, or June or reside within
17 the lower 48 states in the months of April, May, June,
18 July, or August.

19 What's the purpose and the need for this document?

20 The purpose of the EIS is to:

21 1. Evaluate alternative strategies to reduce,
22 manage, and control resident goose populations in the
23 U.S.;

24 2. To provide a regulatory mechanism that would
25 allow state and local agencies, other federal agencies,

1 and groups and individuals to respond to damage
2 complaints caused by resident Canada geese; and

3 3. To guide and direct resident Canada goose
4 population management activities in the U.S.

5 The need for the EIS is two-fold. One is the
6 increasing resident goose populations coupled with
7 growing conflicts, damages, and the socioeconomic
8 impacts that they cause has resulted in a reexamination
9 of the Service's resident Canada goose management.

10 The draft looks at seven different management
11 alternatives. The first alternative is Alternative A,
12 which is no action, which everything is compared to.
13 Alternative B is a nonlethal control and management
14 alternative, which includes only nonfederally permitted
15 activities. Alternative C is a nonlethal control and
16 management, which includes federally permitted
17 activities. Alternative D is expanded hunting methods
18 and opportunities. Alternative E, integrated
19 depredation order management. Alternative F, the
20 proposed action, which we term state empowerment. And
21 Alternative G, a general depredation order.

22 Alternative A would result in no additional
23 regulatory methods or strategies that would be
24 authorized. We would continue the use of all special
25 hunting seasons, the issuance of depredation permits,

1 and the issuance of special Canada goose permits.

2 Alternative B, nonlethal management, which
3 includes only nonfederally permitted activities, we
4 would cease all lethal control of all resident Canada
5 geese and their eggs. Only nonlethal harassment
6 techniques would be allowed, no permits would be
7 issued, and all special hunting seasons would be
8 discontinued.

9 Alternative C is a nonlethal management, which
10 includes federally permitted activities. And under
11 this alternative, we would cease all permitted lethal
12 control of resident Canada geese. We would promote
13 nonlethal harassment techniques, there would be no
14 depredation or special Canada goose permits issued, egg
15 addling would be allowed with a permit, and special
16 hunting seasons would be continued.

17 Alternative D, increased hunting. Under this
18 alternative, we would provide new regulatory options
19 to increase the harvest of resident Canada geese.
20 These could include additional hunting methods such as
21 electronic calls, unplugged shotguns, expanded shooting
22 hours. These seasons could be operational during
23 September 1 to 15, they could be experimental during
24 September 16 to 30, and they would have to be conducted
25 outside of other open seasons.

1 Alternative E which we termed integrated
2 depredation order management really consists of four
3 different depredation orders. There's an airport
4 depredation order, a nest and egg depredation order, an
5 agricultural depredation order, and a public health
6 depredation order. Implementation of each of these
7 would be up to the individual state wildlife agency,
8 special hunting seasons would be continued, and we
9 would also continue the issuance of depredation permits
10 and special Canada goose permits.

11 The airport depredation order would authorize
12 airports to establish and implement a program which
13 could include direct and/or indirect population control
14 strategies. The intent of the program would be to
15 significantly reduce goose populations at airports.
16 The management actions would have to occur on airport
17 premises.

18 The nest and egg depredation order would allow the
19 destruction of resident Canada goose nests and eggs
20 without federal permits. The intent of this program
21 would be to stabilize current breeding populations.

22 The agricultural depredation order would authorize
23 landowners, operators, or tenants which are actively
24 engaged in commercial agriculture to conduct either
25 indirect or direct control strategies on geese

1 depredating on agricultural crops. Management actions
2 would also have to occur on the premises.

3 The last depredation order was the public health
4 depredation order, which would authorize state, county,
5 municipal, or local health officials to conduct
6 indirect and/or direct population control strategies on
7 resident geese when it's recommended by health
8 officials that there's a potential public health
9 threat. Again, management actions would have to occur
10 on the premises.

11 Our proposed action we term state empowerment.
12 Under this alternative, we would establish a new
13 regulation which would authorize state wildlife
14 agencies or their authorized agents to conduct or allow
15 management activities on resident goose populations.
16 The intent of this program would be to allow state
17 wildlife agencies sufficient flexibility to deal with
18 problems caused by resident geese within their state.
19 It would authorize indirect or direct population
20 control strategies such as aggressive harassment, nest
21 and egg destruction, gosling and adult trapping, and
22 culling programs. It would allow the state to choose
23 implementation of any of the specific depredation
24 orders which were under Alternative E. It would
25 also -- during existing special hunting seasons, it

1 would expand the methods of take to increase hunter
2 harvest -- and I went over Alternative D -- such as
3 additional hunting methods such as electronic calls,
4 unplugged guns, expanded shooting hours. Again, these
5 would be operational during September 1 to 15, they
6 could be experimental from September 16 to 30, and they
7 would have to be conducted outside of other open
8 seasons.

9 Additionally, there would be a conservation order
10 provision under this alternative which would provide
11 special expanded hunter opportunities during the
12 portion of the Migratory Bird Treaty closed period --
13 that is, August 1 to 31 -- and also during the open
14 period of September 1 to 15. It would authorize those
15 additional methods such as electronic calls, unplugged
16 guns, expanded shooting hours, and liberalized bag
17 limits. And again, these would have to be conducted
18 outside of other open seasons.

19 Under this alternative, the Service would annually
20 assess the impact and the effectiveness of the program,
21 and there would be a provision for the possible
22 suspension of the regulations -- that is, the
23 conservation order and the regular hunting season
24 changes -- when the need was no longer present. We
25 would also continue all special and regular hunting

1 seasons. We would continue the issuance of depredation
2 and special Canada goose permits. The only state
3 requirements of the program would be to annually
4 monitor spring breeding populations and annually report
5 the take under any authorized activities.

6 The last alternative we term the general
7 depredation order. Under this alternative, we would
8 allow any authorized person to conduct management
9 activities on resident geese that are either posing a
10 threat to health and human safety or causing damage.
11 These would be available between April 1st and August
12 31 and would also provide expanded special hunting
13 opportunities like I went over in Alternative D. We
14 would continue the use of special and regular hunting
15 seasons and the issuance of depredation and special
16 Canada goose permits. Authorization for all management
17 activities under this alternative would come directly
18 from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

19 Under the affected environment, we looked at two
20 different things. We looked at biological environment
21 and socioeconomic environment. Under the biological
22 environment, we looked at the resident Canada goose
23 population, water quality and wetlands, vegetation and
24 soils, wildlife habitat, and federally listed
25 threatened and endangered species. Under the

1 socioeconomic environment, we looked at the migratory
2 bird program, which includes a sport hunting program
3 and a migratory bird permit program; social values and
4 considerations; the economic considerations such as
5 property damages and agricultural crop damages; human
6 health and safety; and the program cost.

7 The environmental consequences forms the
8 scientific and the analytic basis for the comparison of
9 all the different alternatives. It analyzes the
10 environmental impacts of each alternative in relation
11 to the resource categories that I just went over. And
12 again, the no action alternative or Alternative A
13 provides a baseline for all of these analyses.

14 Under the no action alternative, what we would
15 expect to happen is that populations of resident Canada
16 geese would continue to grow. In the Atlantic Flyway
17 we would expect about 1.6 million within 10 years; in
18 the Mississippi Flyway, upwards of 2 million in 10
19 years; here in the Central Flyway, around 1.3 million
20 within 10 years; and the Pacific Flyway, about 450,000
21 within 10 years. We would expect that there would be
22 continued and expanded goose distribution problems and
23 conflicts caused by resident geese. There would be
24 increased work loads, and there would be a continued
25 impact to property, safety, and health.

1 Under our proposed action, what we would expect is
2 reduction in populations, especially in specific
3 problem areas. We would expect some increased hunting
4 opportunities; significant reductions in conflicts;
5 decreased impacts to property, safety, and health;
6 initial work load increases, but we do expect that
7 there would be long-term work load decreases as these
8 populations decrease; and the alternative would
9 maintain viable resident Canada goose populations.

10 Some of the recent modeling that's been done
11 suggests that in order to reduce the four flyway
12 populations from the current levels of about three and
13 a half million down to the flyway-established
14 objectives of about 2.1 million would require each year
15 for 10 years: One, the harvest of an additional
16 480,000 geese annually over what's occurring now; or
17 the take of an additional 852,000 goslings annually;
18 third, the nest removal of 528,000 nests annually; or
19 four, the combination of an additional harvest of
20 240,000 geese and the take of 320,000 goslings
21 annually. Each one of these would have to occur for
22 ten years each year.

23 Thus when you look at those numbers, we believe
24 the only way to possibly obtain this is to give states
25 the flexibility to address problems within their

1 respective state. We believe that the population
2 reduction should be addressed on a wide number of
3 available fronts, and since states are the most
4 informed and knowledgeable local authorities on
5 wildlife conflicts, the primary responsibilities and
6 decisions of the program should probably be placed with
7 them.

8 What comes next? First is development of a new
9 regulation to carry out the proposed action. This
10 should be forthcoming in May. Second, a public comment
11 period which Phil already talked about on this draft
12 Environmental Impact Statement ends on May the 30th,
13 and third would be the publication of a final report, a
14 a record of decision, and a
15 final rule which we anticipate for this fall.

16 As I already went over and Phil already went over,
17 the comment period ends May 30, and he's outlined some
18 of the various methods that you can use to send in your
19 comments. These include any oral or written comments
20 that you give us tonight, and any that you may subsequently
21 send.

22 Additionally, we have set up an electronic site which
23 is printed on the back of the card, which you can
24 access all of the information pertinent to the EIS
25 process. This includes both the draft, the news

1 release, some questions and answers, the federal
2 register notices.

3 And on behalf of the Service, I'd like to thank
4 all of you for being here tonight and especially those
5 of you that will provide comments. Thanks.

6 MR. SENG: Thank you, Ron. Now for the important
7 part of the meeting -- to hear what you have to say. I
8 would just like to state once again, when you
9 come to the mike in the center, please state your name and
10 spell it unless it's immediately obvious, tell us what
11 organization you represent if any, and where you're
12 from. So without further ado, card 151.

13 MR. JERRY PETERSON: My name is Jerry Peterson.
14 The spelling is obvious. I want to thank you men for
15 coming here and giving us an opportunity to respond to
16 your proposals. I don't really know what you men are
17 looking for but what we want is solutions. I'm a
18 farmer, and I lose 20 to 30 acres of crop each year to
19 the public game. And that comes right out of my
20 pocket. It would be nice to have some reimbursement.

21 As far as control measures go, I like the
22 presentation, I like the idea that you put it back into
23 the state and local hands. I think that's appropriate,
24 and they're the only ones that know best how to deal
25 with the problem. But I thought you maybe omitted one

1 possible means of control and that would be biological.
2 And I think if you would tap into the resources of our
3 various state university wildlife departments doing
4 research, et cetera, I think you could look at hormonal
5 control and maybe an olfactory agent we could spray to
6 keep them out of our crops. And it's just a short time
7 frame there. And a certain number of crops you
8 don't want them in; some they can go in. I think this
9 would be things to look at.

10 The bottom line is, we all like to see a few of
11 those geese around. We like them. We helped propagate
12 them when they got started. It's tough to control them
13 by hunting. They hear one shot and they get real
14 smart. They'll leave the county. They've tried it
15 here, different counties. They'll go to the next one.
16 They're a very intelligent bird. They're not a real
17 palatable food bird, you know, for the table. So we
18 really don't have the number of hunters that we should
19 according to our population, what I've seen.

20 My lands, I've given everybody that asks
21 permission to hunt them and still the numbers multiply.
22 Control with hunting I don't think will be successful
23 unless there were a spring hunt, and of course, that
24 would be up to the state and local people. And as far
25 as the farmers being able to control the population

1 themselves, I think that's essential. Somehow we need
2 to get a handle on this problem. They've just done
3 very well, and I think there are a lot of different
4 avenues to approach this.

5 You have talked about gosling reduction, egg
6 reduction, more hunting and so forth. I would like to
7 see the research done on it in our universities and see
8 if we can't come up with a better idea. There's a lot
9 of talent out there. There's a lot of information, and
10 I'm just wondering if we couldn't maybe somehow
11 hormonally control egg production, et cetera, or you
12 know, sterilize males somehow. I'm sure there's an
13 opportunity there. That's all I want to say. Thank
14 you.

15 MR. SENG: Thank you. Card 152.

16 MR. JEFF ALBRECHT: Jeff Albrecht,
17 A-L-B-R-E-C-H-T, representing Brookings Wildlife
18 Federation. My compliments to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife
19 Service. Apparently you listened to the first round of
20 discussion. It's pretty obvious through your Alternate
21 F. I can sympathize with these landowners, but what
22 happens when their wetlands dry up? It could very
23 easily happen this spring. So anyways, just my
24 compliments to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for the
25 job they've done here.

1 MR. SENG: Thank you. 153?

2 CARD 153: Pass.

3 MR. SENG: 54?

4 MR. JEFF RUD: My name is Jeff Rud. That's R-U-D.
5 I just would like to say like I said at the last
6 meeting that the hunters in South Dakota, they want to
7 be part of the solution not part of the problem, so we
8 stand ready to help the farmers reduce the population
9 of geese. And it may not seem effective, but it has to
10 help. I feel that various populations over the course
11 of history were quoted as being hunted out of
12 existence, and now with the resident Canada geese, it
13 seems like that's not quite possible. So these
14 proposed alternatives with expanded hunting
15 opportunities I think is good. And again, there's --
16 the guys I hang around with, they're all looking for
17 places to hunt geese. And they got the equipment and
18 they're ready to do it at a moment's notice. So I just
19 would make a general comment in support of hunting as a
20 tool to use in the resident Canada goose population
21 control.

22 MR. SENG: Thank you. 55?

23 MR. JIM BROWN: My name is Jim Brown. I'm from
24 Madison, South Dakota. I agree with the gentleman back
25 here in talking about the wetlands drying up. I've

1 lived in this state a long time and I've seen a lot of
2 drought. I've seen, you know, 10, 15 years where there
3 was no water at all. So what happens to these birds
4 when that happens? Do they go further north to Canada?
5 Wherever, I don't know. Wherever they nest at. But
6 I'm not in favor of electronic calling. I don't
7 believe in that. I don't believe in some of the things
8 they're proposing. Unplugged shotguns, what difference
9 is that going to make? You know, I can't believe
10 that's going to make a difference.

11 It's one of these things that when they started
12 this thing, we shut them down for five years. We lost
13 five years of hunting Canada geese. And all of a
14 sudden, boom. Now we want to kill the geese off so --
15 but there are sprays out there and they use them in
16 some states. You guys probably know more about it than
17 I do. It smells like bubble gum, and geese will not go
18 near it. I know guys that have tried it and they're
19 spraying it around their fields and that's as far as
20 the geese go. And I think it's something that you
21 should check into. I know a guy that -- a friend of
22 mine that's going to try it next year, and I think it
23 will work. They won't go any further than that spray.
24 And then by the time that wears off, the geese are big
25 enough when they fly past it, you know, and the greens

1 are big enough they won't even want them. That's my
2 comment. Thank you.

3 MR. SENG: Thank you. 56?

4 MR. RON REED: My name is Ron Reed. I farm with
5 my son about 40 miles west of Brookings at a little
6 town called Oldham. A week ago today early in the
7 morning, we got 5 inches of rain in 20 minutes. We
8 ended up the next day -- or a week ago today, we ended
9 up getting another inch and 65 hundredths. We ended up
10 with 7.3 inches of rain. Every little pothole, every
11 slough -- you know what 5 inches of rain in 20 minutes
12 will do to washing? And we have a mess over there.

13 I'm not worrying about these lakes all going dry
14 because we got a lot of lakes around me. And I farmed
15 in that area for 53 years, and we've never had lakes go
16 dry where there wasn't water within flying distance for
17 the geese.

18 I've been with the Department of Agriculture in
19 South Dakota for, oh, between 30 and 35 years in
20 different -- well, different jobs if you want to use
21 that terminology. I'm now on the state weed and pest
22 commission. And one thing these Canadian geese do,
23 they cause a weed problem. When these sloughs and
24 lakes go down, why they catch the different weeds,
25 whether it was Canadian thistle or whatever it might be

1 on their feet, and there will be new patches coming up
2 all the time.

3 Right now I have two cannons going. We've had
4 real good cooperation with our game department, with
5 the conservation officers. They're right there if you
6 say something. But we put a cannon in on the wheat
7 field, and they've already got about 20 acres of that
8 wheat field gone. Sixty-five geese walked out of there
9 the other night. Even with the cannon going -- I'm
10 sure you're all aware of it -- the geese do get --
11 they're smart birds. They steal green like that and
12 they get -- and they need some help. They'll be right
13 back there again.

14 I would like to invite some of you people if you
15 got time to come out to my property tomorrow and I'll
16 show you the damage they have done. It's cost me
17 between 10 and 15, \$20,000 every year for the damage
18 that these Canadian geese have done.

19 There are just too many geese, and there are
20 getting to be more each year. Something has to be
21 done. Either turn this thing over to the wildlife
22 people if they want to and then go ahead and subsidize
23 us farmers a hundred percent through the meal box. And
24 we just get these crops in because it's not that -- I
25 realize you're here for geese, but we've got the same

1 problem with deer in our area. It's a mess. And I
2 tell you, I'm here representing a lot of my neighbors
3 because they're busy trying to get back into the fields
4 and get some beans in the ground and finish planting
5 corn. I could go on and on and say many other things.
6 But you have a standing invitation to come out to my
7 land and take a look and see what these geese are doing
8 right now. Thank you.

9 MR. SENG: Thank you. 57?

10 CARD 157: Pass.

11 MR. SENG: 58?

12 CARD 158: Pass.

13 MR. SENG: 59?

14 CARD 159: Pass.

15 MR. SENG: 60?

16 MR. MARK WILLADSEN: My name is Mark Willadsen,
17 W-I-L-L-A-D-S-E-N, and I'm from Sioux Falls. I, too,
18 would like to add comments that I believe that hunting
19 is a viable alternative to help reduce the populations,
20 and I would like to see the hunting opportunities, you
21 know, available to everyone on an equal basis. I also
22 favor the proposed plan. It seems like it's the one
23 that makes the most sense to me, and it takes into
24 account, you know, a lot of different ways to help
25 solve the problem. And I think we should take a look

1 at it and give it time to work and keep an eye on it so
2 it doesn't go the other direction too. We went from --
3 it used to be a rare sight to see a Canada goose to now
4 they're all over everywhere in a relatively short
5 period of time. And I think we need to, you know, keep
6 an eye on that and make sure that we don't go back the
7 other direction too. Thanks.

8 MR. SENG: Thank you. 161?

9 CARD 161: Pass.

10 MR. SENG: 62?

11 MR. CHUCK ROKUSEK: My name is Chuck Rokusek.
12 I'll spell my last name for you. R-O-K-U-S-E-K. I'm
13 president of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation, and
14 I'm here tonight to thank the Fish & Wildlife Service
15 for giving us the opportunity. I think after listening
16 to what you had to say tonight, I think it's best if we
17 put this in the control of state where the state can
18 work with the landowners and the sportsmen to come up
19 with the ideas and programs that are going to be
20 successful for South Dakota, including access for
21 hunting, ways to control the geese. And I like the
22 idea of maybe opening it up earlier in August. If we
23 have to have a conservation order, it might add
24 additional days. Maybe the 15th of August, whatever.
25 But I think our people in South Dakota, the people that

1 work in game and fish, can do a good job of that.

2 MR. SENG: Thank you. 163?

3 CARD 163: Pass.

4 MR. SENG: 64?

5 MR. DICK BROWN: Good evening. I'm State
6 Representative Dick Brown, and I'm from Sioux Falls,
7 District 14. A couple things I wanted to mention. I
8 think Alternative F is an outstanding one. It's the
9 one that gives us the most flexibility. We've done a
10 lot in the state of South Dakota to bring together the
11 landowners, the sportsmen, and the Game, Fish and Parks
12 to work in a unified way. And I think even the
13 landowners will recognize that vital assistance.

14 It's not a concern, but I want to raise the issue
15 that if you turn it over to the states, which I think
16 is a good idea, that you not necessarily abandon the
17 ongoing supportive services, which you hopefully will
18 do. And there may be ways that the Fish and Wildlife
19 and the Agriculture Department can be of assistance to
20 Game, Fish and Parks and some of the states that may
21 need additional assistance financially or otherwise to
22 help supplement control of the program. So in other
23 words, moving control over should not be hopefully
24 abandonment but yet sort of a continuing good working
25 relationship, which I'm sure does exist.

1 There is a part two on that early August. As a
2 hunter who does a lot of hunting and has taken
3 advantage in the Salem area and those places, the
4 August -- a lot of times when we're out there, the
5 geese have already done a great deal of damage,
6 particularly the beans in that early spot, by the time
7 we get to September 1. And the biologists will have to
8 take a look at that. The early part of the season, I
9 think the analysts can look at it and examine. And
10 then you need to -- coming from a major metropolitan
11 area to a small part of the state, that the flexibility
12 of the local things that the Game, Fish and Parks are
13 working on the airports and those kinds of things are
14 really vital. So I think you've done an excellent job
15 on Alternative F, and we just need to continue our
16 working together with you at the local and state level.
17 Thank you.

18 MR. SENG: Thank you. 165?

19 CARD 165: Pass.

20 MR. SENG: 66?

21 CARD 166: Pass.

22 MR. SENG: 67?

23 CARD 167: Pass.

24 MR. SENG: 68?

25 CARD 168: Pass.

1 MR. SENG: 69?
2 CARD 169: Pass.
3 MR. SENG: 70? No 70? 71?
4 CARD 171: Pass.
5 MR. SENG: Anyone in the 70's?
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MR. SENG: Anybody in the 80s?

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MR. KENT EVERSON: Yeah. Right here. 88.

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MR. SENG: 88.

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MR. KENT EVERSON: My name is Kent Everson,

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E-V-E-R-S-O-N, and I'm a member of the Hayti Township

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Board just 45 miles northwest from Brookings here. And

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I'd say virtually every farmer in our township, if not

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the county, has at least one instance of geese. I know

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I have land I farm in several of the neighboring

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townships, just, you know, little pieces scattered

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around here and there, and I have problems in every

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township that I have land in. And I applaud the Fish &

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Wildlife Service for working on this project and

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realizing that we do have a problem. And I think you

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have a good solution, and at least it's a good

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beginning to solving the problem. And I really -- I

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hope that the state -- if this goes through, I hope

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that the State Game, Fish and Parks Department is

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equipped to handle it and work with the local

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governments, the county and township governments, and

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individual landowners to help with the problem. I

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believe some -- the depredation permits and, you know,

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getting permission to individual landowners to help

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control in isolated areas needs to be a process that's

1 easy. And you know, we don't have to want to jump
2 through oodles of hoops to get this done. And like I
3 say, I feel like you've got -- this is the first
4 exposure I've had to the proposal and haven't had a
5 chance to study it, but if the proposal works like your
6 presentation here is leading us to think, I think
7 you're going in the right direction. So thank you.

8 MR. SENG: Thank you. 89?

9 CARD 189: Pass.

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12 MR. SENG: Anyone in the 90s?

13 MR. LEE MCMANUS: Yeah. 91.

14 MR. SENG: Okay. 91.

15 MR. LEE MCMANUS: My name's Lee McManus,
16 M-C-M-A-N-U-S. I'm from Sioux Falls. I'm a hunter. I
17 first of all applaud you guys for the great work you've
18 done. I mean it's obvious you put a lot of time in
19 this. Speaking just for myself, I'm strongly in favor
20 of turning the issue over to the state and letting the
21 state handle it. I am not in favor of an August
22 opening. I think a lot of these birds are probably
23 hitting the ditch already in September. It's
24 unfortunate. Also on a personal level, I'm not in
25 favor of anything electronic in water fowling.

1 But I think -- I understand these farmers really
2 need help, and I really think us hunters can do it.
3 I'd like to see Game, Fish and Parks come up with some
4 kind of mechanism to merge hunters with farmers who
5 really need it. But if you really want to help reduce
6 these numbers, you've got to do something about this
7 possession limit. A two-day possession limit is
8 ridiculous if you want to reduce these geese.

9 Your first season is Labor Day weekend. We go up
10 and we shoot two days. We run into this all the time.
11 With duck hunting, we take the first two weeks in
12 November to hunt ducks. After two days, we're eating
13 ducks until they're coming out of our ears. We're
14 giving them to everybody we can find who will take
15 them. You can't do that with a 14-pound goose. So you
16 need to address that. The guys -- you know, double the
17 possession limit, whatever you want to do. But if you
18 want us to damage some birds, I think a lot of us are
19 talented enough and honored to do it. But we've got to
20 be able to harvest them. Thank you.

21 MR. SENG: Thank you. Others in the 90s? 94.

22 MR. STEVE BIERLE: I'm Steve Bierle from Canton,
23 South Dakota. B-I-E-R-L-E. And again, thanks for the
24 opportunity to comment. I appreciate the time that's
25 gone into this.

1 No question. I'm supporting the proposed F where
2 we give control to the state. I have a lot of
3 confidence in our State Game, Fish and Parks to be able
4 to address the problem.

5 From a biological standpoint, the only thing I
6 would ask is that we would continue to have this type
7 of forum when it comes to a state decision-making
8 process so that sportsmen, landowners, municipalities
9 can all have the ability to voice their opinions.

10 Obviously, I'm a hunter. There's no question when
11 we harvest 50,000 Canada geese in a year in South
12 Dakota that we are having an impact on the population.
13 I agree a hundred percent with Lee McManus in that if
14 you don't get rid of the possession limit, it's awful
15 hard for a guy who just wants to hunt should be able to
16 do that and do it legally, which is obviously a primary
17 concern.

18 So I would appreciate the opportunity I guess to
19 have a voice with the Game, Fish and Parks so that all
20 the different factions that are involved in this can
21 have an impact on it and have equal voice and be able
22 to influence the decision-making process of the local
23 authorities as well. Thanks.

24 MR. SENG: Thank you. 95?

25 CARD 195: Pass.

1 MR. SENG: 96?

2 CARD 196: Pass.

3 MR. SENG: 97? That will teach you to sit in the
4 back.

5 MR. GARY MILLER: Gary Miller. I farm over here
6 south of Arlington, and I agree with the guys that
7 farm. They do a lot of depredation, and we do not get
8 reimbursed for our losses. And I'm for the hunters.
9 Let them have their fun and stuff, but still, I haven't
10 found anybody that really likes to pay to hunt, by the
11 time they give the money for the licenses and stuff.
12 And a lot of guys that come to my place and want to
13 hunt are college kids and don't have an extra 20, 30
14 bucks to give. And we just get stuck feeding them all
15 because the U.S. Fish and Wildlife land is all into
16 grass. I don't see too many Canadian geese living out
17 there and feeding. They're all out in the crop ground
18 feeding. And I just don't think the farmers get
19 reimbursed for their losses. And we're in the business
20 of making a living, and that's all we're trying to do.
21 We're not trying to kill off any wildlife species or
22 anything like that, but we've got to live with them and
23 with control. Thank you.

24 MR. SENG: Thank you. 98?

25 CARD 198: Pass.

1 MR. SENG: 99?

2 CARD 199: Pass.

3 MR. SENG: 200?

4 MR. STEVE LESNAR: My name is Steve Lesnar from
5 Roslyn, South Dakota, and I just have a couple quick
6 comments.

7 MR. SENG: Can you spell your last name, please?

8 MR. STEVE LESNAR: Lesnar, L-E-S-N-A-R.

9 MR. SENG: Thank you.

10 MR. STEVE LESNAR: I can remember when I was a
11 kid, these things that we're talking about tonight, the
12 greater Canadian goose was on the endangered species
13 list. We've done one hell of a job of bringing them
14 back because we're stuck with them now. And I think
15 one thing in our area -- and this is Day County. I'm
16 talking further north of here. I don't know if
17 Brookings County has got the problem we've got, but I
18 think eventually what we're going to be looking at
19 whether we want to or not is a spring goose season.
20 They've used it, implemented it on the snow geese now.
21 I don't know what kind of impact it's had, but when you
22 see sloughs up there, it's little puddles that's got
23 four, five pair in them. Years ago there was no way
24 you'd ever see more than one pair in a slough. And if
25 we don't get on it soon -- and I look forward to

1 working with the state if it goes that way so that they
2 can help us out at least in regional areas if not
3 statewide. Thank you.

4 MR. SENG: 201?

5 CARD 201: Pass.

6 MR. SENG: Two?

7 MR. DAN HUBBARD: Dan Hubbard, just like Old
8 Mother, H-U-B-B-A-R-D. I'm representing myself. I'd
9 like to compliment you on the draft EIS. It's a good
10 job. I'd like to reiterate the comments on the
11 possession limits. Those hunters that are the best at
12 it and want to stay legal really can't kill very many
13 because they're stuck with the possession limit. Other
14 than that, I think I'd like to see in the final
15 Environmental Impact Statement the issue of going past
16 March 10, which a gentleman just before me talked about
17 a spring season. I know there are issues with the
18 Migratory Bird Treaty Act, but we've got around that
19 with the snow geese issue. And I just -- it's probably
20 doable again with the Canada goose issue.

21 The problem with hunting season in the fall is
22 you're not shooting the same birds that are causing the
23 problems. I mean most of the agricultural depredation
24 is a point specific problem. A specific landowner is
25 losing 20, 30 acres of beans because those birds that

1 are there that spring with their broods are walking out
2 and eating the beans. And they're not the ones that
3 are necessarily getting shot the following fall. So I
4 think if you really want to pinpoint the problem, keep
5 the population as large as possible. But to alleviate
6 the problems, you need to shoot the birds that are
7 doing the problems. And the only way really to do that
8 is to shoot them where they're eating, and that's right
9 there in the spring.

10 MR. SENG: Thank you. 203 to 210?

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19 MR. CHUCK DIETER: My name's Chuck Dieter,
20 D-I-E-T-E-R. I'm representing the South Dakota Water
21 Fowlers Association and myself as well. I'd like to
22 just point out a few things. I agree a hundred percent
23 with your choice F, the states. I think it's a good
24 decision. And I agree with Steve Bierle that there
25 should be input meetings like this for the state. But

1 I do want you to remember what -- even something that
2 Mr. Lesnar said. When I grew up, if you saw a Canada
3 goose, that was a big thing. And when I was a kid, I
4 never shot a Canada goose. And I tell you, it's better
5 to have too many geese than not enough. The wildlife
6 biologists, which I'm one of, we know how to take care
7 of populations that are down but we're not sure -- a
8 lot of times, we've always tried to manage populations
9 that are down. But the ones that are up are causing
10 the problems. And so we need to remember that there's
11 a lot of people that enjoy Canada geese out there. As
12 far as Canada geese spreading thistles and things like
13 that, that's not true. They don't spread thistles.

14 MR. RON REED: I'll disagree with that. I'm on
15 the state weed commission and I know.

16 MR. SENG: Sir? Let the gentleman speak.

17 MR. CHUCK DIETER: Okay. I'm just saying I've
18 done a lot of water fowl research, and there's no
19 evidence of that stuff. But I will agree with the
20 landowners. I'm a landowner and have a lot of friends
21 that are landowners. I think the state is doing a heck
22 of a job with the depredation. Every one of the
23 hunters in here pays \$5 per license for the depredation
24 program which the state is running right now. And so I
25 think the landowners -- the only way to really keep

1 things going is to pay them somehow. We need to do a
2 farm bill or something like he said to reimburse them
3 some way for the damage. I think that's -- in the long
4 run, we're going to get complaints that there's one or
5 two Canada geese out there -- because we need to
6 reimburse the farmers for their losses. That's the
7 bottom line in my opinion or else there's always going
8 to be complaints.

9 As far as spring goose seasons, the problem with
10 that is we get a lot of different subspecies of Canada
11 geese migrating through here in the spring. If we open
12 it in the spring, we're not just going to be shooting
13 our local Canada geese, we're going to be shooting a
14 lot of migrators, which the population in northern
15 Canada is hurting. And so that's not a real good
16 option either. It seems to make sense if we could just
17 target the ones that are causing the problems. But
18 it's something that we need to consider. We have to
19 look at it on both sides here. But I think the State
20 Game and Fish Department will do a heck of a job in
21 this state. There's no doubt in my mind. And I think
22 they'll be willing to listen to the farmers. And I
23 think you made a good option there so thank you.

24 MR. SENG: Thank you. 207?

25 MR. GEORGE VANDEL: George Vandel, V-A-N-D-E-L,

1 and I'm with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish
2 and Parks in Pierre, South Dakota. I want to indicate
3 my support of course for Alternative F. I think the
4 Service has done an outstanding job in putting together
5 all the information, going through all the hoops. You
6 came here and you listened to us, and I think that
7 you've incorporated those into your draft EIS. And I
8 want to applaud you. I certainly hope that you're able
9 to take it through the rest of the process, that we can
10 avoid a few court hearings and so forth. And the
11 sooner we get some of these additional tools, I think
12 the sooner we'll be on our way to at least attempting
13 to try to solve this problem. I don't think I'm going
14 to guarantee anybody here that we're going to be able
15 to render completely the problems with giant Canada
16 geese. When you have a bird that's that big and that
17 abundant, there are going to be some issues. But I do
18 think Alternative F does provide us with a lot of
19 additional tools that we can put to work.

20 I'm not going to ask the folks to stand up in
21 here, but I notice there's a pretty good segment of
22 Game and Fish people that are here because they're real
23 interested in this subject. They get beat up a lot
24 sitting at their home territories from people who have
25 too many geese, and at the same time if they go too

1 far, they get beat up by people who have about -- who
2 want more geese. I guess I'm starting to wonder why
3 we're preferring Alternative F and turning it all over
4 to the states.

5 So we made a decision a long time ago that we were
6 largely responsible for bringing these goose
7 populations back, and so we take our responsibilities
8 very seriously. We could have easily pushed this off
9 on USDA APHIS and the Fish & Wildlife Service, and we
10 chose not to. We expanded a lot of staff time, a lot
11 of money. We got additional funding through that \$5
12 surcharge, which half of that goes to wildlife
13 depredation. And we put on additional manpower, we put
14 on additional seasonal employees, we purchased some
15 equipment. We got a lot of folks in this room who work
16 very hard and will continue to work very hard. But I
17 think those additional tools will give us the
18 additional flexibility. You've got to have the
19 flexibility because every situation's unique. In some
20 cases, some things work; and some cases, others don't.
21 And by having all those tools, I think it will be very
22 helpful.

23 The final thing I'd like to say is I don't think
24 people need to worry about us decimating the goose
25 population. We consider that to be a very valuable

1 resource. We want it managed more in I guess where our
2 citizens want it to be managed. But on the other hand,
3 we worked so hard to bring them into this state, and we
4 recognize the value that they have -- not only from a
5 consumptive use but also a nonconsumptive use -- that
6 we're certainly going to manage them wisely. We are
7 going to do it by a public forum. We're going to
8 aggressively take a look once the final EI comes out
9 and start picking apart which one of those we can use.
10 We'll go to our commissions and we'll go back to the
11 public and let them know what we're going to do and
12 involve them in that process.

13 So once again, thank you very much for coming
14 here, and I appreciate your support for Alternative F.

15 MR. SENG: Thank you. 208?

16 MR. LIEBERMAN: My name's Josh Lieberman,
17 L-I-E-B-E-R-M-A-N. My Grandpa's Stan Lieberman so I
18 grew up hunting for a lot of years. And I just now
19 started living in Brookings, and I started hunting in
20 Day County here in the last four years. And when I go
21 up there throughout the summer -- I mean we got more
22 geese up there than we know what to do with. And I
23 hunt every possible weekend. And the possession limit,
24 it's a killer. I mean you can't give enough birds
25 away. I mean if I go up there with all my buddies and

1 hunt with five, six guys every day during the weekend,
2 and we'll be out of the field by 10:00 with our birds.
3 And you can only do that for so many days, and you've
4 got to get rid of them. That's one big hurt right
5 there.

6 The spring thing, it's not really -- I don't know
7 if it's such a good idea. If you want to kill the
8 birds and if you just want to -- if you want to
9 actually hurt the population and bring it down, yeah,
10 you can go ahead. And I mean you can snow goose hunt
11 all day and put a thousand rags out and you'll have 500
12 Canadians drop in on you all day. I mean if you want
13 to take your plugs out and you want to kill the geese,
14 you can go out there with five, ten guys and kill two,
15 300 geese in a day if you want to, but I don't really
16 know if that's the solution either. I think -- I don't
17 know if it's more of a problem that -- I don't know.

18 We're putting a lot of funding into the pockets of
19 like, say, Ducks Unlimited and stuff. You know. I
20 mean we're putting all this money in towards these
21 private organizations which is supposed to benefit
22 something good. Well, it's going -- I think that the
23 money that's going towards our licenses should be
24 directly deposited for the loss of farmers, because if
25 our money's going to programs that are supposed to be

1 helping the habitat and the production of Canadian
2 geese, it's not working right now. And I think we just
3 need to reimburse the farmers because they're the ones
4 getting hurt.

5 My father-in-law, he farms. He's got a dairy farm
6 right out by north of Clark, and they probably lose,
7 oh, 40 to 60 acres every year. And that's a lot of
8 money. I mean these people aren't planting crops for
9 nothing you know. So I mean I do my best. But when
10 you got laws in the way, and you can only possess only
11 so many birds, I think that's one of the biggest
12 things. I heard some comments about plugs not helping.
13 I find -- I totally disagree. I think if you were to
14 get four or five guys, which I usually take out every
15 weekend or try to every weekend, you take your plugs
16 out and you up your daily limit to five, eight birds;
17 eight to ten birds; whatever. You can take care of
18 them. Thanks.

19 MR. SENG: Thank you. 209?

20 CARD 209: Pass.

21 MR. SENG: 210?

22 MR. TONY BAKER: My name's Tony Baker from
23 Watertown, South Dakota. I'm a hard core water fowler.
24 And I mean give the power to the state, sure. I mean
25 you're right. They're probably the best people to have

1 it. But this early hunting season, this isn't going to
2 be a good deal at all, the proposals you guys are
3 putting forth.

4 Earlier you put some numbers up of what you expect
5 the geese to be, and basically what you did there was
6 try to predict the weather for the next ten years. And
7 the weatherman can't even predict what the weather's
8 going to be the next day. So I think that was a mighty
9 task you guys put forth to do there. I don't
10 believe -- I don't believe the numbers will probably be
11 met. It's easy to overstate when you're living in boom
12 times. But I tell you what, the way for those numbers
13 to be met is if we implement this early hunting season
14 with the proposed leniencies. Because as the first
15 person stated -- I can't remember his name -- geese are
16 smart. And they get smart and they get smarter. And
17 pretty soon, they're going to be just unhunttable.
18 They're going to be like snow geese are today. We have
19 electronic calls, all those things that you guys are
20 proposing. I believe there's many, many different
21 means that could be taken here.

22 Personally, you know, a lot of the farmers said
23 today that they give permission all the time. I
24 haven't seen it. Opening early season this year, we
25 asked 34 farmers; 32 declined us. I mean it's hard to

1 kill geese if you don't got land to do it. We did most
2 of our killing on public land, and if we were able to
3 get private land, I can't imagine the decimation we
4 could have caused.

5 But I would also like to say that I am for getting
6 rid of possession limits because I did run into that
7 many times as I'm sure some of the other hunters did
8 here this last season. I'd also maybe like to throw
9 out a suggestion: To get a list of farmers together
10 that are having these problems and that would allow
11 hunters to hunt their land and maybe give that to the
12 Game, Fish and Parks, you know, for guys like me that
13 are having these permission problems and such. That's
14 all I have today.

15 MR. SENG: Thank you. 211?

16 MR. CHARLES PETERSON: I'm Charles Peterson from
17 Brookings. I was surprised that a spring season was
18 not included in the list of alternatives. I believe it
19 demonstrates a lack of imagination by those people
20 preparing the list of alternatives. I believe that a
21 significant reduction can be accomplished by a spring
22 season more or less concurrent with the light geese
23 season. Individual limits do not have to be as large
24 as they do for snow geese so I think that should be
25 considered. And I believe the people in South Dakota

1 would respond very well to that. I had some Canada
2 geese fly over me while snow goose hunting. Would have
3 been glad to do my part if I would have been permitted
4 to do so. Thank you.

5 MR. SENG: Thank you. 212? That's all the cards
6 we gave out. Is there anyone who hasn't spoken who
7 would still like to?

8 MR. JOHN POLLMANN: My name is John Pollmann. I'm
9 from Brookings. I just want to echo some of the things
10 that have already been said tonight. I wasn't quite
11 sure what I was going to say before. Like Lee, Steve,
12 and many others said, I support the giving control to
13 the state. I think that's where it needs to be. We
14 know best here in South Dakota how to handle our own
15 problems.

16 I don't support the August opening. The birds can
17 hardly fly it seems during that time. And some of the
18 things that haven't been said, you know, even in
19 September when you shoot them, they're hard enough to
20 pick. Imagine shooting them in August when they still
21 have all the pin feathers. Electronic calls I'm not in
22 support of. I think it takes away from the sport.
23 Part of being a water fowl hunter is knowing how to
24 call and using the decoys and trying to outsmart them.
25 I just think you'd run into problems. Not necessarily

1 problems but you're turning it into something that it
2 shouldn't be by using electronic calls.

3 You know there's a problem. Obviously, there are
4 landowners that are losing money, they are losing
5 crops. But when we shoot these geese I'm going to
6 assume in September, the damage has already been done,
7 and so we need to find a way to alleviate those
8 problems when it's occurring. I don't know if that
9 means, you know, mass destruction, egg destruction, the
10 ganders and goslings. I don't really want to see that.
11 As a fan of waterfowl, the last thing I want to think
12 about is, you know, those geese being killed when
13 they're young. That means less geese we see in the
14 fall. If there's a way to even keep the geese off the
15 ground through certain sprays, whatever, that would be
16 wonderful. That way we're keeping them off the ground
17 but we're not killing them. I think that's about all I
18 have. P-O-L-L-M-A-N-N.

19 MR. SENG: We have another over here?

20 MR. TREVOR MANTEUFEL: My name's Trevor Manteufel,
21 M-A-N-T-E-U-F-E-L. I'm from Brookings; originally from
22 Minot, North Dakota. I moved here to Brookings about
23 two and a half years ago so I've kind of seen how these
24 geese have just kind of been stock piling all the way
25 through the upper Midwest here.

1 And just to highlight on a few things. As far as
2 getting permission from landowners, this year this past
3 season was definitely the best hunting season I've ever
4 had in my life. I took the whole fall off of
5 work and basically hunted all fall. So I saved all my
6 money in the fall from summer just so I could hunt, and
7 that worked out pretty good for me. I did most of my
8 hunting the early season up at Day County and Deuel
9 County north of here. And the landowners that I talked
10 to -- I did my scoping in August. And I just met these
11 guys and just went up to their doors, and the opening
12 weekend, Labor Day weekend, camped out in the farmer's
13 front yard. We pitched a couple tents. And they were
14 more than happy to let us hunt in their stock dam right
15 behind their house.

16 So I don't think -- you know, if you do your
17 homework, you can find a lot of farmers. There's a lot
18 of farmers in this room here that are willing to let
19 people go out and shoot as many geese as they want just
20 as long as it's up to the limit you know.

21 As far as the unplugged gun rule, I'm for it. A
22 lot of people -- you know, there's a lot of good
23 callers in this room, get the geese real close. A
24 couple guys can just take out a whole family. The more
25 geese on the ground, that's less smart birds that are

1 getting away. It's all about the education I would
2 think.

3 I also worked for North Dakota Game and Fish a few
4 years ago, and as far as using the propane boomers, we
5 did some depredation projects up there, and like a few
6 other people said, the geese just get smart. They know
7 what a shotgun does in the fall, but you know, you
8 don't see anybody sitting out in the field with a
9 propane boomer scaring them away. So that's all I
10 have.

11 MR. SENG: Thank you.

12 MR. ERIN MCMANUS: My name is Erin McManus,
13 E-R-I-N, M-C-M-A-N-U-S. I'm from Sioux Falls here, and
14 I'm a hunter. And I agree with a lot of the things
15 that have been said tonight and disagree with a lot of
16 them, too, I guess. I'm sympathetic to the landowners.
17 I understand. I mean I'm not a farmer so I don't
18 completely understand; just like many landowners
19 probably don't understand the birds like some of us
20 hunters do. I think there should be some kind of
21 reimbursement. One thing that was mentioned to me was
22 maybe something for landowners that allow hunting
23 because there are a lot of landowners that don't -- I
24 mean personally, I'm not going to pay to hunt. It's
25 not really -- I don't know. I've lived in this state

1 my whole life and I've never had to pay to hunt
2 anywhere. And I enjoy the sport a lot, but I'm just --
3 I don't know. I guess I had some traditions from my
4 family and I understand the problem but I'm not going
5 to -- I pay a lot of money to hunt all year-round you
6 know. Some people come here and hunt one weekend and
7 may drop a couple thousand dollars. That's great, but
8 you know, we spend money every trip on gas and motels
9 and food and all that.

10 I'm in favor of a lot of the hunting issues as far
11 as limits. Possession limits, of course, I think need
12 to be changed if you want to really effectively handle
13 this. Electronic calls I won't use even if it's legal.
14 As far as opening season in August, there's no way.
15 First of all, it's still -- the early season last year
16 we had 70 plus degrees. The birds are -- they're very
17 young. I mean if you're going to do that
18 you might as well look at something
19 prior to that as far as the nesting eggs type
20 situation.

21 I think there's a lot that we can do. As far as
22 the state goes, if it comes down to what's proposed, I
23 agree with that, letting the state handle the issue. I
24 do also think it's a great idea to have more public
25 meetings like this as far as where we can get to meet

1 with landowners that are having the problems, meet with
2 hunters that want to help them take care of the
3 problems. We're not against any landowners. We're not
4 trying to keep these geese around to damage your fields
5 or anything like that. We'd love to help you out.
6 Trust me, there's a lot of guys that will sign up on a
7 list for you to call them. If you have problems,
8 they'll be right there to help you out with it. Thank
9 you all.

10 MR. SENG: Thank you. Anyone else who has not had
11 a chance to speak who would still like to?

12 MR. SPENCER VAA: Spencer Vaa, V-A-A, and I'm the
13 state waterfowl biologist here in South Dakota for
14 Game, Fish and Parks. And I just want to just take a
15 minute here just to let the public here know what South
16 Dakota Game, Fish and Parks is doing for the Canada
17 goose damage management right now. We were the first
18 state in the Central Flyway back in 1996 to implement a
19 Canada goose depredation program. So if you're a
20 farmer out there in South Dakota who's having a problem
21 with too many geese on your place, if you call a Game,
22 Fish and Parks employee -- and most likely, you'll
23 probably call your local conservation officer -- tell
24 them you got a problem with your geese going into your
25 soybeans, corn, whatever. We can help you. We may

1 recommend an electric fence. We put out literally
2 hundreds of them. A lot of times that single strand of
3 electric fence will stop those birds from going in that
4 soybean field.

5 We may recommend what we call a foraging site,
6 i.e., a food plot. We'll pay you local rental, county
7 rental rates, to plant a 66 feet wide, a hundred foot
8 wide strip of wheat or oats or something like that so
9 the geese have something to eat, and you'll get paid
10 for it. We have different programs like that. And if
11 you just give us a call, we'll try and help you out.

12 We've got a very active hunting program. South
13 Dakota was again the first state in the Central Flyway
14 to implement September Canada goose hunting seasons,
15 and in fact, that was since 1996. And in fact, last
16 year we harvested over approximately 50,000 Canada
17 geese during that September season. So I think hunting
18 is a very, very vital part of this overall program, and
19 the hunters that responded in this state last year --
20 like I say, our hunter's survey said that 50,000 Canada
21 geese were harvested during September. And we also
22 know from the wing bee when the hunters send
23 in their goose tails, we know that those are resident
24 Canada geese. They're not the small ones coming down
25 from Canada. We're targeting the birds that are

1 causing the problems. We have guys sitting in this
2 room in the summertime all summer long that work out
3 there with their tractors and mowers and go on state
4 game production areas and federal water fowl production
5 areas and take out a little bit of that grass and mow
6 it so it looks like a golf course. And we even throw
7 down a little shelled corn to get those geese off the
8 private property and onto the public land where we
9 don't care if they eat the grass. That's what that
10 land is purchased for.

11 So there's a lot of different programs that we
12 have in place right now in South Dakota that if you're
13 a landowner that has a problem, call us
14 and we'll do the best we can. Like George said, we
15 have people hired in the summertime. All they do is go
16 out and take goose complaints. And we're trying our
17 best and I think we responded pretty well.

18 And that leads to the next thing that Alternative
19 F, the state taking over the management.
20 Because, hey, let's face it, the Fish and Wildlife
21 Service has got one guy living in Pierre. What's going
22 to happen if they handle goose complaints? What's
23 going to happen when the guy with the soybean problem
24 is going to call one guy in Pierre and expect some
25 action? It's not going to happen. You've got to go to

1 the agency that's got personnel. And like George said,
2 the \$5 out of your pocket when you buy a hunting
3 license now, half goes for depredation and half goes
4 for hunting access.

5 We have made some strides in our state I think,
6 and we've got some experience. We've got a lot of
7 people out there with experience now how to deal with
8 this. We have a program and I think it's working. I'm
9 not saying it's going to solve everything. Our
10 population goal is 50,000 Canada geese in the state.
11 We're at 170,000 last year so we've got a ways to go.
12 But the encouraging thing about last year, when the
13 Fish and Wildlife took their survey in May, is the
14 population, instead of going up, up, up, was leveling
15 off. So like some of the guys talked about drought, we
16 get some dry years, and there's hunting activities and
17 other programs, I think we've got a good chance that
18 maybe we can get it under control. And I'm pretty sure
19 the state is the best way to handle it. Thank you.

20 MR. SENG: We had another back here?

21 MR. DERRICK JOHNSON: I'm Derrick Johnson.
22 Spencer Vaa basically beat me to what I was going to
23 say. I am one of those guys; I have worked with the
24 state and handled goose problems before. The state
25 does have a lot of programs to help out people, help

1 reimburse farmers. And from what I see, a lot of
2 farmers just don't realize that. They want some kind
3 of reimbursement, but they don't sign up for these
4 programs either because they don't know about it, they
5 didn't take the time to read the letter that was sent
6 to them, or a lot of farmers just don't want handouts.
7 So I don't believe that's -- I don't think straight
8 reimbursement is where the emphasis needs to be put on
9 handling the goose problem. Not only just because of
10 that and I don't think the state agencies like South
11 Dakota, North Dakota, places like that, they don't have
12 the funds to put that kind of money towards just paying
13 for geese. That would tap out all their funds for
14 everything else. Thanks. Thank you.

15 MR. SENG: Anyone else that has not spoken who
16 would like to?

17 UNKOWN SPEAKER: What is the recommendation of the
18 state game manager regarding spring Canada goose
19 season?

20 (Discussion between the group.)

21 MR. SENG: If you have questions about the state
22 issues, talk to George or Spencer after the meeting.
23 That would be appropriate.

24 Anyone else who wants to make a comment for the
25 public record? Okay. Then I'd like to remind you that

1 May 30 is the deadline for comments. If you want to
2 send something in or you think of something after you
3 leave here tonight, take that card with you and send
4 those comments in. Also, if you did not sign the
5 sign-up sheet and you would like to receive a copy of
6 the final EIS, the sign-up sheets are on the table in
7 the back. Most of all, I thank you all for coming out
8 tonight and giving us your comments. We really
9 appreciate you taking the time. Thank you very much.

10 (End of meeting.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA)

: ss

COUNTY OF MINNEHAHA)

I, MAXINE J. RISTY, Court Reporter and Notary Public,
do hereby certify the foregoing pages 1-56, inclusive, are a
true and correct transcript of my stenotype notes.

In testimony whereof, I have hereto set my hand and
official seal this _____ day of _____,
2002.

MAXINE J. RISTY, RPR, CSR
Court Reporter and Notary Public
My Commission Expires: October 14, 2005