



National Wildlife Federation

National Advocacy Center

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February 6, 2018

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman, Committee on Environment and Public Works
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Bennett
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry and Natural
Resources
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Senator Douglas Jones
326 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Bennet, and Senator Jones,

On behalf of our more than 6 million members and supporters, the National Wildlife Federation thanks you for reintroducing the Chronic Wasting Disease Transmission in Cervidae Study Act. This important bill will support research critical to stopping the spread of a disease that threatens the foundation of wildlife conservation, hunting, and the outdoor economy in North America.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is an always fatal neurological disease found in captive and wild members of the deer family that has the potential to devastate deer, elk and moose herds across the country. Cervids (members of the deer family) affected by the disease exhibit a loss of body condition, eventually “wasting” away and succumbing to the disease. Research shows deer in states like Wyoming are showing negative population level effects in the face of CWD, with other states like Wisconsin facing yearly increases in prevalence of the disease within their free ranging herds. CWD has now spread to 26 states.

The crisis posed by CWD is even larger than its potential biological impacts. Deer hunting is the foundation of many state’s conservation funding through license sale revenues and excise taxes on deer hunting equipment. It is also the

lifeblood of many local communities due to direct and indirect spending. Further expansion and entrenchment of the disease within the United States threatens a conservation crisis as states' natural resources departments face the potential of reduced license sales and skyrocketing costs associated with battling the disease.

The CWD Transmission Study Act will ensure needed research is conducted into how this disease spreads - and how it can be stopped. It will also identify research gaps and review current best practices. This information will provide a stronger scientific basis for state-led efforts to combat CWD.

NWF encourages Congress to also make sure the results of this and other research can be acted upon by authorizing and appropriating funding to support state wildlife agencies in their efforts to halt chronic wasting disease.

The successful recovery of America's once severely depleted populations of deer, elk, and moose remains one of the world's greatest conservation success stories. It has become one of the most fragile conservation successes due to the existential threat posed by CWD. Thank you for introducing the CWD Transmission in Cervidae Study Act, and please let us know how we can support its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Leahy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "L".

Mike Leahy
Director of Wildlife, Hunting and Fishing Policy
National Wildlife Federation