

My name is Wesley Maley, I am a law enforcement officer, licensed outfitter in the state and have a degree in wildlife management; the well-being of our deer population is my top priority. House Bill 1151 is essential to helping protect deer population and the economic impact hunting brings to our state. Many people are trying to use chronic wasting disease (CWD) as the reason to ban hunting deer over bait saying that several deer feeding on the same bait spreads the disease. The science over the spread and fatality rates of CWD is still being debated. Deer are extremely social animals that herd together from December to March, they do this for safety from the elements and predators. During this time, they eat from the same food sources. During the fall, deer constantly mark their territory by licking the same branches and hitting the same scrapes. Yet, somehow a 5-gallon bucket of corn is going to cause the demise of the whitetail population. Studies indicate male/antlered deer appear to contract CWD most often, but experienced outdoorsmen know they are the ones that spend the least amount of time eating from food plots and supplement feeding. Minnesota allows you to bait 10 days prior to the hunting season, South Dakota allows baiting 30 days prior to the hunting season. Both states talk about CWD but apparently it doesn't spread other than hunting season?

The North Dakota whitetail population is very unique and parts of the state have had habitat diminished drastically due to various reasons, increasing habitat should be a larger concern than CWD. Our weather also plays a significant part on deer population. This winter has already been devastating on North Dakota wildlife, the number of deer found dead from the storms is shocking. My family spends the winter months trying to help the deer survive by scraping fields down to the dirt and leaving up to 50 acres of standing crops. In places where these measures are not taken deer move into farms and elevators where corn is stored, if we can't stop deer from congregating in these areas what effect will banning baiting have in the long term?

Population control is another part of this debate. In the areas of the state that have a healthy population some degree of control needs to be in place. Bow hunting currently has a 40% success rate, remove the baiting element and that will decline drastically. This will leave a majority of the population control up to the 16 days of rifle season and car deer accidents. When population control can't be maintained disease is more likely to break out; the snow geese population was allowed to balloon leading to disease spread which has led to the deaths of numerous birds of prey all over the state.

Hunting over bait is very important for archery hunts to ensure an ethical hunt. Outfitters, like myself, that offer bow hunts want to ensure deer are harvested ethically and not left wounded and suffering. This is very difficult without bait as it helps ensure the deer are at the proper distance and angle from the hunter. This fall I will be hosting four Wounded Warrior hunters; this would not be possible without the knowledge that I can have the deer in the proper location for these individuals that may have limited mobility or require special aids. I invite those that say hunting over bait isn't a sport to come try a bow hunt with us.

Land owners already control if they want to allow baiting on their land. Baiting is illegal on state and federal land already. Banning baiting will only affect private property owners, the same individuals that care about our deer population and work to support it by building habitat, developing food plots and working to help wildlife survive our sometimes harsh and deadly winters.

The science does not support overreacting to CWD. If you read into it, you can find a theory to support any decision you want. Testing from Game and Fish indicates we have no problem with the disease. Yet it seems to be a priority during every conversation. Our issues with wildlife in North Dakota is habitat

and getting youth involved in the outdoors. I honestly believe that's where the time and money should be spent. HB 1151 simply gives the landowner the decision how they want hunting to occur on their land. You can debate how hunting is ethical from weapons to electronics. It simply comes down to how people want to hunt for themselves. HB 1151 leaves it to the outdoorsman and the land owners to decide how they hunt.

It doesn't matter if you're talking EHD, CWD, or Avian Flu there is nothing man will do to stop it in the wild. It's based on population, and the good lord. We can't control disease in humans yet here we sit talking about stopping it in wildlife by locking things down. Game and Fish controls every aspect of hunting now and does a good job. I don't think there is a need for them to be involved in the fine details. This conversation is about much more than baiting. This is doing what we can to assist wildlife in the winter months to get them through. House Bille 1151 is simple and leaves the decision to the property owners in the state. Game and Fish made the decision for State and Federal Land and it's illegal to use a food source on them. I am fine with that. State Government shouldn't decide that its wrong if I leave an Alfalfa bale out for the deer in the winter.