



NATIONAL DEER ASSOCIATION

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House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
C/O Rep. Todd Porter, Chairman
State Capitol
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

19 January, 2023

RE: Opposition to House Bill 1151 – Relating to baiting deer for hunting

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the National Deer Association (NDA), I am writing to provide our comments in opposition to North Dakota House Bill 1151 (HB 1151). Introduced by a handful of Representatives and Senators, HB 1151 would severely undermine the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's (NDGF) authority and ability to manage deer and deer hunting with the best-available science. Specifically, the bill removes the authority from NDGF to issue rules or adopt a policy or practice prohibiting the baiting of deer for lawful hunting. The bill, and the removal of management authority from NDGF, is a direct attempt to undermine chronic wasting disease (CWD) management efforts in the state.

The practice of baiting and its role in deer management have grown in terms of controversy and complexity in recent years. The NDA acknowledges the available scientific data surrounding this issue is incomplete and, at times, inconsistent. However, baiting increases density around a single food source and therefore increases the potential for direct and indirect contact among individuals. Currently, there are 12 deer diseases that are thought to be spread by direct contact, two of which are bovine tuberculosis (TB) and CWD.

The NDA opposes the expansion of baiting where not currently legal. The NDA will not work to repeal baiting where currently legal, except where CWD (or other known diseases) is present. Similarly, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) sites that unnatural concentration of cervids facilitates CWD transmission and establishment if CWD prions are present. AFWA lists the prohibition of baiting or feeding wild deer as a best management practice (BMP) for the prevention of CWD introduction and establishment. HB 1151 intentionally and irrationally removes this management practice from the authority of NDGF.

Please consider joining the National Deer Association (NDA) in opposing this legislation. Wildlife management decisions, and especially disease management decisions, should remain in the hands of professional wildlife managers – not lawmakers. HB 1151 would result in a massive setback for disease and deer management in North Dakota. Please vote 'no' on HB 1151.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions or for more information.

Sincerely,

Torin Miller
Senior Director of Policy