

Chairman Porter, committee members, my name is Wyatt Thompson. I have been involved in the outdoors since before I was able to walk, being carried along to the deer stand by my dad or grandpa. At 9 years old, and after a couple years of practice at our local youth archery club and becoming proficient at 15 yards with my bow, I set out on my first archery hunt, sitting over a bait pile that was placed at that known 15 yards I had been practicing at, harvesting my first deer that fall with a clean, ethical shot. Since then, my love for the outdoors has exploded, not only myself, but for also getting youth involved. I am hoping that I can carry my son with me to the bow stand and have him be able to observe the various degrees of wildlife interacting at a bait pile that kept me entertained at such an early age. Therefore, I am here today testifying in favor of HB 1151.

I will be taking my time to talk about the data that has been collected from hunter harvested heads, roadkill finds and sick or suspected animals from units around the state, with a focus on unit 3F2.

CWD was first found in North Dakota in 2009 in the southwestern part of the state, more specifically inside the borders of unit 3F2. The North Dakota game and fish department then moved quickly, implementing the first restriction on hunting over bait in state within the borders of unit 3F2 through their 2010 Chronic Wasting Disease proclamation, even after a bill to ban baiting introduced into the legislature in 2007 and 2009 was shot down.

Since 2010, the baiting ban has been moving unit by unit, and is now up to 20 of the 38 units in North Dakota. Although over 50% of the units in North Dakota have a baiting restriction currently, I would like to dive into the numbers that have come from around the state while looking at unit 3F2 a little deeper, where the ban was implemented in 2010.

The results of the testing are as follows:

From 2009-2011 as stated by Dr. Dan Grove, State Game and Fish Department wildlife veterinarian, **“three consecutive years of surveillance in deer hunting unit 3F2 have resulted in a total of three CWD positive animals.”**

<https://www.deeranddeerhunting.com/content/articles/deer-news/deer-transport-and-baiting-restrictions-set>

2012: **0 positives**, and this is also the year that the baiting ban expanded to surrounding units.

2013: **2 positives**, Both from unit 3F2

<https://cwd-info.org/second-mule-deer-from-3f2-tests-positive-for-cwd/>

2014: **2 deer**, both from unit 3F2

<https://cwd-info.org/two-deer-test-positive-for-cwd/>

2015: **0**

2016: **2 Positives**, both from 3F2

2017: **2 Positives**, both from 3F2

<https://www.valleynewslive.com/content/news/Two-deer-test-positive-for-CWD-in-North-Dakota-471649964.html>

2018: **Three deer taken during the 2018 North Dakota deer gun season** have been confirmed positive for chronic wasting disease, according to Dr. Charlie Bahnson, wildlife veterinarian for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. While **two of the positive deer were taken in unit 3F2**, an area of North Dakota known to have CWD, the third was taken from Divide County in deer unit 3A1

<https://gf.nd.gov/news/2831>

2019: **8 Deer**, six from unit 3F2 and two from 3A1.

2020: 18 Deer, Fourteen were from hunting unit 3F2, two were from unit 3A1 and one was from unit 4B, and one was harvested in unit 3A2

<https://gf.nd.gov/news/4463>

2021: 26 Deer total found positive, Fourteen were from hunting unit 3F2, eight from unit 3A1, and one was found in unit 3B1. There were also Single positive deer were also found in three units (3C, 3D1 and 3E2) where the disease had not been previously detected

<https://www.newsdakota.com/2022/02/23/north-dakota-game-fish-cwd-test-results/>

2022: No Results posted yet (Usually available around the 20<sup>th</sup> of January)

After hearing this data, I would like to point out that out of the 70 positive deer that have been found in North Dakota in 13 years of results, 48 of these have come from unit 3f2, with 34 of them being from the fall of 2019 or later, all with only 1 deer being found dead in state... which was a possible death due to CWD but is unable to be determined for certain because the deer was found dead, then tested and was found positive, so it was assumed CWD as the cause of death.

The Game and Fish Department is arguing that this is not an ethics driven agenda, but rather data and science based. They also state that there cannot be an accurate study used to determine that baiting specifically helps spread CWD. I would like to use the data that the Game and Fish Department collects and posts every year to point out that a long-term ban on baiting in fact does NOT slow the spread over an extended period of time.

68.6% of positive CWD cases in North Dakota have come from 3F2. Of that 68.6%, only 29.2% of cases came from the first 10 years of collection. That means that in the last 3 collection seasons (2022 data has not be released), 70.8% of all positives, this also accounts for 48.5% of all positive cases found statewide since the start of monitoring and testing, have come from 3F2 after a baiting ban had been in place for 9 years prior.

After running through those numbers, did the baiting ban that has been in place for now 12 years actually have a long-term effect on reducing CWD, or do these numbers, specifically the drastic spike the last 3 years of testing suggest that the ban on hunting over bait the Game and Fish imposed is ineffective at impacting spread out of natural deer interaction.

One last thing that I would like to bring up in closing... If the North Dakota Game and Fish Department is a science and data driven department, why are they moving away from the emphasis on data collection in the southwest corner of the state, specifically from unit 3F2 as we were told at a fall CWD meeting that took place in Minot? This is and has been the best data collection site from North Dakota that would back up the science they want us to believe... That a baiting restriction slows the spread of CWD, yet they are moving away from data collection there, specifically after a huge leap in positives the last 3 years. Perhaps the data and science does not match the narrative and agenda.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify today and will answer any questions to the best of my ability that the committee may have.