

Senate Energy and Human Resource Committee

RE: HB 1151 ---In Favor

I am Jon Pieper of Gillett, Wisconsin and the Operations Manager at Apple Creek Whitetails. I have been at Apple Cree Whitetails since 2010. I take care of 3,000-4,000 deer on the ranch and he have been doing research on CWD, which in my opinion, isn't as bad as everyone makes it out to be.

We are one of the largest breeding whitetail ranches in the United States. When we came down with CWD on our property, the state wanted to shut us down and we didn't go for that. We didn't stand for that. We wanted to fix CWD, we didn't want to just kill the deer. Let the state of Wisconsin spend the money how they want, we aren't killing our deer.

We are required to report to the state the number of deer that have CWD detections and there is a document that has been distributed to North Dakota Legislators showing this information, yet, without explanation. This reporting is by county and there are two deer farms in our county and when a deer is tested, and has a positive CWD detection, it is documented. As I will explain, we test every deer that is taken at our farm and we have 200-300 hunts per year as well as our research deer.

We started a study with Humic Acid in 2017. Humic Acid is the only substance on the planet that will kill CWD prions on contact. It is a very affordable substance that currently, runs about 40 cents per pound. When it is mined, it looks like charcoal and basically contains all the good materials that mother nature planned and supplied, then man started using chemicals to control mother nature.

People drive their cars and the exhaust, and other things, are applied to the ground. It kills the stuff that actually would kill CWD, and now the good stuff is gone. Round-Up kills the stuff that kills CWD naturally in the ground. Everything that man has done is wrecking the ground and along with it, the stuff that naturally kills the CWD prions.

Humic Acid helps with the growing of food plots at a rate of 250 pounds per acre. It is a natural fertilizer and a ground conditioning substance. When use it as a fertilizer, we notice drastic changes to food plots, even during dry times. When added to the feed, we note within a few months, improved coats and healthier deer.

If you take CWD prions and place them in bleach water for a week, it will still infect the deer. Take CWD prions with water, and a humic acid mixture, and every one of the prions will be dead within 20 minutes. We take this information and use the humic acid in the deer feed at a rate of 30 pounds per ton, and as a fertilizer in the ground. Humic Acid stops the progression of CWD in the deer's body.

We have done genome studies and alleles through DNA. There are CWD resistant deer out there in the wild. We found it on our ranches and we are breeding and making efforts to make all the deer on our ranch, CWD resistant.

We have proof that Genome Resistance is working. We have a ranch that is working with us, that follows the same protocols and substances. They took a section of their hunting ranch, which was getting CWD positives of 60-70%. They cleared out the area, put in the proper resistant deer and in a totally contaminated area of CWD, left them for 2 years. As of now, every deer is still CWD negative.

The genome study we are working on is proving to be 100% successful.

The state of Wisconsin has now opened up a grant for deer ranchers to have their deer tested for genomes and resistance. The ranchers are starting to breed everything to resistant deer. Hopefully, this will lead to being able to collar, destroy the pedicles of the bucks, and to get them into the wild to breed the resistance. All to speed up Mother Nature.

The state of Wisconsin has failed to prove to me that any deer in the state, or any deer in the country, has died of CWD. Deer can live to be 7-8-9 years old with CWD in their body, which to me, 90% of deer harvested in the country are 2-3-4 years old, at maximum. If a deer can live to be 9 years old, even with CWD, it is not really an issue.

I personally would like to see baiting allowed. I think baiting is fine and to add humic acid to the supplemental feed, to help the health for the deer, which would be unbelievably better. It makes food plots grow better and it kills the CWD prions in the ground. It is the only substance that will kill it naturally, besides burning the prions to 6,000 degrees.

When CWD, in 1996, came about in Madison, Wisconsin, the state tried to kill off every deer in a 50-mile radius. There are natural resistance in the wild but when the states go to killing off deer because of CWD, you are taking the resistant ones too. Mother Nature will fix CWD. Humic acid and genomes will help speed it up.

CWD is not the big issue. It is not affecting the herds. I think there should be more concentration on EHD because that is an issue.

Basically, the entire United States says that if a deer in the wild, walking in circles, drooling, looking sick, then it must have CWD because that is the final stages. I found one animal like that on our property. I videoed the animal, shot it and tested it. It was negative and died of e-coli infection and pneumonia. No one knows for sure and that is the point I am getting to--deer will live with CWD.

CWD is just not as big a problem as they say it is.

They say whitetail deer will not grow antlers if they are positive with CWD. We had a 3 year old buck that was positive. The next summer, I ended up cutting his antlers off because they were too big and he couldn't carry them around.

They say CWD positive deer will not have fawns. The does that are in our quarantine pens are having fawns like a "regular" deer would.

It does not affect the meat. I have to test every animal that is shot and I have tested over 6,000 deer. Hunters come on our property, shoot deer and take the meat home with them. The bones stay on the property. I call the hunter to tell them how their deer tested. Over 1,000 times, I have made the call and the hunter says they have already eaten the meat. No one has ever gotten sick from CWD. The state can't prove a death by CWD.

Fawns are not being born with CWD. They are getting it from the infected ground.

CWD doesn't affect the deer like people are saying. We have studies to prove it and studies that say we can fix it-- we just have to let the state, let us fix it.

Our research deer are tested at 3 and 4 years old and 80% of the deer that are positive, live to be 9-10 years old before they die on their own. They did not die of CWD--they died of old age.

When our ranch became positive, the next fall we took 239 captured deer out of our hunting area and did a rectal CWD test, which is not recognized by the state of Wisconsin, so we brought in Texas A & M which does recognize the test as legitimate. We found 19 positive deer.

The state of Wisconsin wanted us to kill all the deer that were CWD positive and we refused because we wanted to do research and we can't do it without positive animals. The state wanted us to prove that the CWD rectal test was true so, we shot and tested the lymph of both the positive and negative deer. They wanted us to continue and we refused to keep killing our deer to prove them our rectal testing is accurate.

Our ranch has worked with Texas A & M, state of Michigan, University of Iowa- Ames, Sacramento, CA, and 7 other deer farms. The owner of Apple Creek Whitetails has spent \$1.5 million of his money because we feel so strongly about this path.

We have to do the 5-year protocol before we can formally release declarations on all of the studies and information yet, we are living proof that deer are living to the ages of 7-8-9 with CWD. Positive deer are having 16-17 fawn. CWD resistant genes are out there and are being bred. The progression of CWD is being stopped.

CWD is just not as big as a problem as they say it is.