

RE: HB 1151

Dear Energy and Natural Resources Committee and Representatives,

I am submitting this letter in support of HB 1151. Prior to writing this letter I read some of the other letters, it is clear the studies that have been performed do not support the idea that baiting is the cause of cwd. I am a ND resident, but I also own land in MN which bans baiting of any kind yet continues to have cwd. If stopping baiting would cease the spread, why does MN still have it? The only logical conclusion is that banning baiting doesn't stop the spread, but simply makes the appearance of doing something even if it isn't effective.

I agree with all the others who referenced that deer feeding in a food plot have a much higher chance to come in contact with another deer than a bait pile as from what I have watched since 2013 when I bought the land, a single deer doesn't just eat the whole plant, they eat part of it and move on while another deer will come up and finish the plant. And on that same thought, deer spend much less time at a bait pile than in a food plot as the bait pile is only created to gain their attention for a short period of time while on their way to a natural food source. Deer in a food plot spend much more time as that is the natural food they are looking for.

I have been a bow hunter for about 20 years now. I am absolutely convinced that using a bait pile allows the hunter to make more ethical shots, creating the most humane kill possible as the animal is in a more predictable spot versus just trying to shoot one as it happens to walk by. I also don't believe that bait piles are the cause of cwd as the deer regularly visit what is called a licking stick. A place where both male and female deer visit to rub a hanging stick with their mouth to let each other know who has been there. This is used every year during the rut. If bait piles are supposed to cause cwd, why do deer naturally go to this licking stick? You would have to imagine that if transferring saliva from one to another is a cause of cwd, would they have been made to use a licking stick? Wouldn't they naturally be drawn to a better method of communicating with one another? Animals aren't made to engage in an act that will kill themselves.

Lastly, while not related to cwd, but an effect of banning baiting is that you lose hunters. For some, that 5 gallon bucket of corn is the difference between success and failure. Why the argument can be made that the hunter should become better, putting out that inexpensive pile of bait vs creating a food plot is most likely the difference between a person hunting and not hunting. Most people can afford that bag of corn, most can't afford the land, the equipment, the seed, the fuel or the time to create food plots. I know this first hand owning land in MN. I am fortunate to be able to afford planting food plots, but I don't have kids. If you want to continue to have hunters harvest the needed amount of deer each year to maintain healthy numbers in the herd, don't do something that will counteract that.

Thank you for your time....

Jim Steen

1/16/23