

Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

Please vote NO on HB 1151

I am writing today as a sportswoman, North Dakotan, and as a mother.

CWD is an always fatal disease to deer, elk, and moose. There are numerous rigorous scientific studies that demonstrate baiting contributes to the spread of disease in wildlife populations. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is charged with managing our wildlife populations now and into the future. If the rate of CWD infection is allowed to grow unchecked, the health of our deer herd will be negatively impacted. These statements are fact.

As a hunter and someone that relies on wild game as part of my family's diet I am concerned about the short-sighted nature of this bill. As a hunter and as a mother I take great pride in my ability to harvest healthy sustainable protein for my family. I am thankful that my daughter understands where her food comes from and the sacrifice of life that is involved in sourcing that food. My hope is that someday, when she is ready, she chooses to be a hunter. I hope that when she makes that choice, her opportunities are as great as mine have been. Every year that my family harvests a deer we submit that deer to the North Dakota Game and Fish Department for CWD testing. Every year we wait with bated breath, hopeful the results of that test come back negative. When you have put so much of yourself into harvesting an animal that will sustain your family, the thought of that animal being CWD positive is unbearable. Right now, CWD rates are low in our deer population and my family has yet to face the difficult decision of discarding meat from a CWD positive harvest (the CDC states that if your animal tests positive for CWD, do not eat the meat). Food that was meant to feed my family. That is a choice I hope never to have to make and one that is preventable. For me personally, increased CWD rates in our deer herd will mean less opportunity and a greater chance of harvesting a CWD positive deer.

If this bill is allowed to pass the wildlife professionals that are charged with protecting and managing our wild deer herd, will lose a valuable tool in combating the spread of CWD. If wildlife managers can no longer use one of the easiest most cost-effective tools to manage CWD, it will only be a matter of time until we see CWD rates increase, and the health of our deer herd decrease. I ask that you allow the ND Game and Fish Department to continue managing our wildlife populations without the restrictions of HB 1151.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Let's use that same common sense approach and oppose HB 1151.

Respectfully,

Rachel Bush