

Energy and Natural Resource Committee,

Please DO NOT PASS HB 1236.

I am a lifelong hunter, angler and outdoorsman. Hunting, Fishing and outdoor pursuits are my extracurricular activity of choice. Honestly, it's all that keeps me in North Dakota. We have something truly special in this state and I do not want to see it disappear. It's unfortunate that there is a coalition of individuals that are deliberating looking to strip the North Dakota Game and Fish Department of their ability to apply sound science to the management of our deer populations. State Agencies all over the country have established that CWD is a real threat to the future of our deer and elk populations. North Dakota has been fortunate that this disease, which is 100% lethal, has not yet had a significant impact on our deer or elk populations. There is no mistake that the disease is here in North Dakota, but either the disease has not had time to fully manifest, or the prevalence and exposure has not yet reached a level that has had a direct impact on populations. It brings me peace of mind knowing that the professionals at the North Dakota Game and Fish Department have the expertise and resources to monitor this disease.

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is 100% funded by license fees. Those fees not only allow the ND Game and Fish to monitor the disease, but also provide this service for no additional charge to all resident deer hunters. All hunters are encouraged to submit the head of their harvested deer, or use the free kit (the Department will even mail it out upon request) to provide lymph node samples. The results of this test are usually available within a few weeks, which then provides the hunter with important information to make the determination if they can safely consume the meat of the deer they harvested. Although there is no current evidence that CWD is contagious to humans, there is always the chance that it could eventually make a species leap. Taking away the ability of the ND Game and Fish to provide this free monitoring service makes it impossible for residents of this state to make informed decisions that could have a direct impact on their health, the health of their families, or anyone else that could potentially consume CWD infected meat.

I implore you to please DO NOT PASS HB 1236.

Thank you,
Kerry Whipp