

TESTIMONY OF JOHN BRADLEY
NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION
HOUSE BILL 1325
HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
JANUARY 24, 2025

Chairman Porter and Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

For the record, I am John Bradley, Executive Director of the North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF).

NDWF is opposed to HB 1325 as written, mainly the line “including a microscopic slide of the prion and necropsy report.”

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a disease affecting cervids (deer family) such as white-tailed and mule deer, elk and moose. The disease, caused by a mal-formed protein or “prions”, can be found in deer body fluids; saliva, urine, and feces. Like all prion diseases, in humans and animals, it's always fatal and has no known cure. CWD was first detected in wild deer and elk populations in Colorado and Wyoming in the 1980s. Since, it has spread to 35 states and 4 Canadian provinces. CWD was first detected in south central North Dakota in 2009 and since has started to encroach in the NW portion of the state.

The ND Century Code charges the NDG&F with protection and management of the State's big game herds as well as all of ND's wildlife. As such, the NDG&F developed a CWD management plan in 2002, and updated it with 20 years of new data in the “2023 CWD Surveillance and Management Plan”. The Plan aims at slowing the spread of CWD and keeping the prevalence of CWD to a minimum where it does occur. The management plan relies on a minimal set of tools in dealing with disease. Increased hunter harvest to keep populations in check, baiting bans, and transportation restrictions are some of the only tools the NDG&F has to use in management of this disease.

But many sportsmen remain uninformed about CWD, or are misinformed about its causes and modes of spread, its effect on deer herds, and ultimately its potential long term effect on hunting.

Therefore, the NDG&F must continue to be able to use the best science and demonstrated management practices to monitor and manage the incidence of CWD in North Dakota's big game herds. CWD oversight, management and mitigation by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department are critical for healthy ecosystems and wildlife in North Dakota.

NDWF urges a Do Not Pass on HB1325.