

Monday, January 13, 2025

RE: SB 2137

Dear Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

My name is Kerry Whipp. I am a lifelong hunter, angler and outdoorsman that cherishes the unique outdoor resources and opportunities North Dakota offers. It saddens me that a bill such as SB 2137 has been brought to the legislative assembly again. This issue was kicked around, hashed out and beat to death during the 2023 legislative session. Fortunately, our legislative assembly was wise and chose to listen to facts and science, and not the emotions and scare tactics of the CWD deniers. Since the 2023 session, the proponents of this bill have come forward with absolutely nothing new – no science, no statistics, nothing to definitively support their arguments. However, during that same time period, more research from across the country (Universities, Laboratories, and Scientific Agencies) have been able to further solidify that CWD is a real threat to our deer and elk populations. There is no denying that once an animal contracts this disease it is 100% fatal. There is also no denying that CWD is spread through transmission from animal to animal contact, or through contaminated environments. Baiting congregates animals, not only contaminating an isolated environment, but also creating an immediate risk of point-to-point contact. Just like other Wildlife Management Agencies across the country, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department realizes that controlling the spread of CWD is critical to the long term health of our deer and elk in North Dakota. It is foolish and irresponsible to pass any legislation, such as SB 2137, that restricts the ability of our wildlife professionals to manage our wildlife resources.

I also want to point out that even though the CWD deniers and proponents of baiting were unsuccessful last session, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department developed a CWD management policy that implemented a significant compromise to their original plan. They agreed to remove baiting restrictions on closed units if CWD minimum sampling criteria are met, and NO CWD was detected. This was a compromise that the proponents of SB 2137 have apparently ignored.

Please vote DO NOT PASS on SB 2137.

Thank you,

Kerry Whipp