

**2025 SENATE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SB 2137**

# **2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES**

## **Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee**

Fort Union Room, State Capitol

SB 2137  
1/17/2025

A bill relating to the use of supplemental feed for hunting
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10:35 a.m. Chairman Luick called the meeting to order

Members present: Chairman Luick, Vice-Chair Myrdal, Senator Marcellais, Senator Weston, Senator Weber, Senator Lemm

### **Discussion Topics:**

- Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and research costs
- Winter and feed gatherings
- Private property rights
- Deer loss
- Youth, elderly, veterans and the disabled
- Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) or blue tongue
- Impact on cattle
- Unintentional baiting
- Case western prions
- License number management
- ND Game and Fish Department
- Tourism and deer outfitters
- Starvation losses
- Culling and over-harvesting
- Supplemental feeding and health
- Cost benefit
- Local county wildlife impact
- Definition of a prion
- Animal tracking

10:35 a.m. Senator Keith Boehm, District 33, testified in favor and introduced the bill.

10:41 a.m. Daryl Lies, President of the ND Farm Bureau, testified in favor.

10:47 a.m. Senator Paul Thomas, District 6, testified in favor.

10:52 a.m. Andy Buntrock, farmer from Menoken, ND, testified in favor.

10:59 a.m. John Adams, landowner and hunter from Bottineau, ND, testified in favor and submitted testimony #28361.

11:03 a.m. Dusty Backer, testified in favor and submitted testimony #29643.

11:10 a.m. Jared Higgins, ND Stockmen's Association, testified in favor.

11:16 a.m. Gabe Thompson, farmer from Antler, ND, testified in favor and submitted testimony #28384

11:23 a.m. Matt Seykora, lifelong resident of ND, testified in favor and submitted testimony #28416.

11:29 a.m. Wyatt Thompson, resident from Antler, ND, testified in favor and submitted testimony #29619.

11:39 a.m. Christopher Jorde, sportsmen, landowner, and farmer from Towner, ND, testified in favor and submitted testimony #29460.

11:43 a.m. Jeffrey Whillock, hunter, veteran, and voter, testified in favor and submitted testimony #29330.

**Additional written testimony:**

28356, 28358, 28365, 28366, 28375, 28392, 28424, 28425, 28441, 28442, 28443, 28444, 28472, 28493, 28565, 28569, 28572, 28592, 28647, 28652, 28653, 28656, 28663, 28665, 28667, 28685, 28699, 28700, 28714, 28743, 28749, 28751, 28765, 28777, 28780, 28781, 28783, 28784, 28785, 28786, 28787, 28789, 28794, 28795, 28836, 28837, 28838, 28845, 28847, 28897, 28951, 28952, 28962, 28971, 28990, 29001, 29057, 29074, 29075, 29080, 29083, 29084, 29085, 29087, 29089, 29099, 29101, 29114, 29115, 29118, 29120, 29125, 29162, 29180, 29186, 29187, 29194, 29207, 29208, 29219, 29235, 29239, 29250, 29253, 29254, 29256, 29258, 29277, 29287, 29305, 29306, 29308, 29309, 29316, 29325, 29350, 29361, 29370, 29373, 29376, 29382, 29385, 29388, 29389, 29390, 29393, 29405, 29406, 29413, 29414, 29432, 29437, 29438, 29439, 29440, 29446, 29450, 29458, 29462, 29467, 29473, 29479, 29483, 29486, 29487, 29488, 29502, 29505, 29508, 29509, 29512, 29514, 29527, 29530, 29536, 29545, 29547, 29550, 29557, 29559, 29563, 29567, 29569, 29574, 29577, 29583, 29584, 29589, 29592, 29596, 29602, 29603, 29626, 29631, 29632, 29634, 29638, 29639, 29640, 29641, 29642, 29644, 29645, 29646, 29647, 29648, 29649, 29650, 29651, 29652, 29653, 29654, 29655, 29659, 29661, 29664, 29668, 29669, 29671, 29672, 29679, 29680, 29681, 29683, 29690, 29692, 29693, 29697, 29702, 29703, 29704, 29713, 29714, 29717, 29718, 29721, 29722, 29726, 29728, 29729, 29731, 29735, 29737, 29743, 29744, 29749, 29750, 29755

11:47 a.m. Chairman Luick closed the hearing.

*Audrey Oswald, Committee Clerk*

I am asking that you please vote yes on SB 2137. Over the last 20 plus years there have been over 40,000 deer tested in ND and only 130 detections (less the 1% of the deer tested) and all them deer were killed by hunters not CWD. The North Dakota game and fish has killed more deer than CWD has when they slaughtered over 40 deer just to test (all came back negative) and they also wasted all the meat instead of donating it when they did that. Deer are constantly coming in contact with each in the wild weather its at feed or just naturally browsing, licking each other to help each other clean themselves, or during the breeding season when the bucks and doe are all sharing bodily fluids urine and more. At scrapes and licking branches all deer in the area visit them and make nose contact and urinate at them spots just to see who is all in the area. The numbers don't back

up the NDGF claim of how contagious or deadly it is. If it was truly as contagious and deadly as they claim the deer herd should be wiped out by now. EHD and hard winters are the real killers of deer in ND. I feel NDGF should quit focusing on CWD and turn there attention to them 2 things if they actually care about "protecting the herd"

Thanks for your time

Yes on SB 2137

Trent Schatz

I fully support passing SB-2137. The amount of time money and energy wasted on CWD is becoming an insult to all taxpayers and citizens of ND. Considering only 1 deer has died from CWD in the last 50 years and there is little to no evidence of bait spreading cwd, banning it for hunting purposes only is nothing more than a government control attempt in the private property of the citizens of ND. We watch as thousands of deer perish every year in ND due to harsh winters and EHD yet nothing is done about either by our wildlife officials yet they aim to restrict what private citizens can do on their own property. Please recommend a do-pass for SB-2137. Thank you

Jeremy Dinius.

01/09/2024

John Adams

6137 Carefree Circle

Bismarck, ND 58503

Phone 701 471 9180

[singlebarrelranch@hotmail.com](mailto:singlebarrelranch@hotmail.com)

Re: SB 2137 The use of supplemental feed for hunting.

As a landowner in Mountrail, Bottineau and Renville Counties I support the use of supplemental feed for hunting. I am also a hunter and have a BS from UND in Fisheries and Wildlife Management. I strongly encourage the passing of this bill. Landowners that appreciate wildlife and their health can and do supplemental feeding for wildlife to help them in times of distress. As a landowner, I do everything I can to help create and maintain food, water and cover but supplemental feeding sometimes is exactly what they need. I feel more strongly about this as a landowner than a hunter. I believe that as a landowner I should be able to supplementally feed wildlife at my discretion regardless of hunting over or hunting near the supplemental feed. Please feel to reach out to me for any questions or discussion.

John Adams

01/10//2025

Written testimony in support of SB 2137

Dear Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

I am writing to you today to show my support for SB 2137 which would not allow the department to adopt a rule or implement policy that would prohibit or restrict the use of supplemental feed on private property for hunting a big game animal.

A similar bill was one of the largest topics of debate in the 68th legislative assembly under House Bill 1151. This previous bill passed the house with overwhelming support from constituents (approximately 80% testimonial support) and a majority of the members of the House Of Representatives. It also had a "do pass" recommendation coming out of committee on the Senate side, but failed on the floor due to sudden political pressures from outside of the legislative branch.

Please be diligently mindful of constituents' responses during this legislative session. SB 2137's intent is strongly supported throughout the outdoor community and hunting over feed is a practice that is widely accepted and/or utilized by the majority of hunters here in North Dakota. The "science" that the Game and Fish and opponents of this bill will try to tout as a viable reason to dismiss SB2137 is not concrete, nor is it proven to be effective in mitigating CWD transmission and control. In-fact, it is quite contrary as the recommended methods/strategies for disease control have been proven to fail in many other states where similar CWD protocols have been enacted. There simply is no reason to implement a hunting restriction (such as banning the ability to hunt over feed) when there is no definitive evidence that supports that the practice of feeding wildlife, and ESPECIALLY hunting game over feed has had a detrimental impact to the herd. Even our own Game and Fish department, responsible for managing the health of our deer herd has hypocritically, (but strategically) disregarded their own policies and criteria for implementing baiting restrictions in several units in the face of a so-called "epidemic".

I hope you are encouraged through this testimony to support SB2137, to help preserve a useful tool that allows hunters the ability to pursue their quarry in a way that they choose to, without restriction, one that utilizes a practice that has been accepted and applied by hunters since the dawn of time.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Matt Williamson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Matt Williamson  
Minot, ND

Senate Ag Committee Members

SB2137- Please support

My name is KariAnn Buntrock and I live on a farm with my husband and 9 and 11 year-old daughters who both love to hunt. I am asking you to support **SB2137** that will allow the use of feed while hunting big game on my own personal/private land. I am asking you to support this bill for these brief reasons:

- It is already legal to feed big game to any extent, but the minute my daughters or I pick up a bow to hunt near feed it becomes illegal under current law because it spreads CWD, per the NDG&F. Therefore, our feed through the winter doesn't spread CWD? This doesn't make sense to even my 8-year-old and can be rectified by **passing SB2137**.
- Our unit 3C was added to the CWD restricted list so we are allowed to still feed, but not hunt over that feed. This unit lost 80-90% of its deer to EHD or Blue Tongue and the NDG&F response is that EHD is natural and just needs to run its course. How are we protecting the herd against CWD when the herd is dead from other causes and there is no attention put on that.
- We need to put the government in check. My property rights as a landowner are being breeched and we need to reinstall my rights as a landowner. Passing SB2137 as it is written, in a very simple manner will do exactly that.

Thank you for your time and call me if you have any questions.

KariAnn Buntrock

## Supplemental feeding for Hunting on Private land

I Jordan Dilse am in favor of using supplemental feeding for hunting in North Dakota. One of the main discussions I get into with other hunters is being able to hunt over bait. Coming from where I am from in SW ND. We have done everything in our power to grow food plots/expand habitat to help recover our deer numbers. When we have gotten into a dry cycle our food plots didnt even come up and our deer ended up having no food later on in the year and we will find dead deer on our land from starvation. One of the main concerns of the public is if there are bait piles all the deer will come to one spot to eat and they will trade saliva. Is there any proof that a neurological disease can be spread by saliva? I have done extensive research into the matter and in fact there is no proven case that there has been a disease on record that can be. But if in fact it was able to be spread, would it not be worse to let the course of action we are on run its course? Hay yards will collect 1-500 deer per winter and they all feed out of the same hay yard. If everyone had their own bait pile or hay set aside on their property. There would be an abundance of food across the state and the deer wouldnt have to bunch up as bad anymore? Less starvation, less issues with deer getting worn out traveling so far for these hay yards. In fact we are able to use supplemental food to help keep deer on our property, but not able to hunt over it? Why would I be able to hunt over food plots then? We are still only allowed one deer per bow hunter for the state, and at that the success rate isnt great at all. So this causes me to believe this is more of an ethics stance than it would be a reason to fight against CWD. For that reason I am for the use of supplemental feeding in hunting.

Senate Ag Committee members

My name is Gabe Thompson a rancher/farmer from Antler ND and an avid outdoorsman as well as bow hunter .. as well as a former instructor in a youth archery club for many years who has introduced many kids to the sport of bowhunting

My testimony today is in support of SB 2137

Today I am sharing what you likely will not hear from the “experts” and those others in opposition to this bill

In almost 15 years of monitoring the NDGF admits only one deer has been found dead in the wild with CWD ...only one

Just 3 years ago by the NDGF own public admission at advisory meetings 50% of the states deer herd or 40-50,000 deer died from starvation and malnourished stress related causes because the NDGF will not work with sportsmen clubs to provide supplemental feed and actively discourage it.

Not that many years ago ND sportsmen had 149,000 tag opportunities.... We now have barely over 1/3 that many at 55,000 ... not from CWD.... remember only one deer has been found dead from CWD ...but from starvation and EHD

That is an almost 200% decrease in opportunities for ND sportsmen as a result of these “experts” management .....

Last session on a similar bill, it was the most testified on bill by ND residents of the session.

Roughly 80% were in favor of that bill preventing the NDGF from restricting hunting over feed or a mock scrape or a mineral block

A few years back in an initiated measure sportsman passed protections regarding hunting and fishing into the state constitution... it reads as follows

“Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good.”

This measure passed with 77% of voters in favor as well, roughly the same percentage of sportsmen who supported last sessions bill on this subject ...we proponents of SB 2137 ARE the voice of ND sportsmen

You will inevitably be told this needs to be left to the “experts” of the NDGF who by any metric have failed miserably in protecting opportunities for sportsmen in our state to hunt deer who can’t even follow their own “science” and policy ....

But the text of the constitution says different.... Quote “will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good.”

“managed by law” ...the peoples ELECTED representatives ... when unelected govt agency bureaucrats will not listen to those they regulate regarding hunting... our constitution specifically instructs the legislators to step in and address the concerns of ND sportsmen ... and a vast majority of ND sportsmen along with myself are asking you to support SB 2137 with a do pass

I am confident other testimonies will break down the flaws in the NDGF “science”, data and their inability to even follow their own policy as well as other poor management actions of reducing deer populations intentionally while the herd is at already vastly reduced numbers from starvation and EHD

I am asking you to follow the sportsmen wishes they placed into the constitution and be the voice of we the people in protecting our deer herd and hunting opportunities with a yes vote on SB 2137

Thank you, sincerely  
Gabe Thompson Jr

January 10, 2024

To: Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs

I am testifying in opposition to SB 2137. I am a lifelong North Dakota resident and hunter and I have spent many seasons bowhunting whitetails over bait. I do NOT have a problem with the ethics of baiting deer. I do have a problem with restricting our state wildlife agency's ability to manage our wildlife and our future hunting opportunities effectively.

If SB 2137 is approved it will set a dangerous precedent. It takes an important wildlife decision away from the scientific professionals at the North Dakota Game and Fish, and turns it over to our Legislature where there is more opportunity for emotional, non-scientific influence from lobbying groups. The North Dakota Game and Fish has many tough decisions to make, but they have proven themselves to act in the best interest of wildlife and future hunting in North Dakota. Other states in our nation have lost hunting rights and hunting seasons because wildlife decisions were taken away from their state wildlife agency and turned over to their legislature and public vote.

The folks at the North Dakota Game and Fish are pro-wildlife, pro-hunting, and are trying to do what's best to ensure quality hunting for future North Dakotans. Please allow these professionals to act in the best interest of future hunting opportunities and oppose SB 2137.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jordan Gleason". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jordan" and last name "Gleason" clearly distinguishable.

Jordan Gleason

I am in support of SB 2137. In the last 2 years not only has the game and fish gone against regulations but also their own science. Example would be pausing restricting 2 units for 2 years and now 3 units this year. I believe this bill will help the game and fish as far landowner relations moving forward. With that brings more access for all residents. This is not a baiting bill, this is a bill to remove a hunting restriction. I feed deer almost year round which by law I can. I believe with the supplemental feeding that I have done over the years has saved quite a few deer in some very harsh winters.

Respectfully, Matt Seykora

1-10-25

Jeff Jacob

616 18<sup>th</sup> st sw

Minot ND 58701 1-701-720-8300

Re: SB 2137 Supplemental feed for hunting.

As a sportsman in ND, I have spent the last 25 years in the deer woods year around. My deer season does not start on the 1st of September and end the 31<sup>st</sup> of December. For me it's a year around love for the Whitetails that call North Dakota their home. From minerals to food plots to supplemental feed is a year around job that enjoy watching all the wildlife take advantage of.

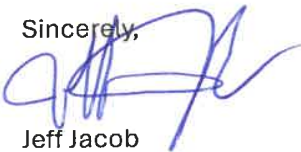
One item that is very important to mention on this subject is. The game and fish have no regulations on supplemental feeding of wildlife. This means you can feed deer year around stateside. What they are trying to regulate is the manner of take. In 2007-2009 a bill came into legislation trying to stop the hunting over supplemental feed and was meet with heavy resistance as the sportsman of ND spoke and the bill failed both times.

For over 50 years we have been hearing about CWD. They are no closer to solving it as they were 50 years ago. We are still chasing a prion that nobody has ever seen. Billions of dollars have been spent on this disease and we have nothing to show for it.

In closing, deer are social animals. They spend their whole life in close quarters. If this disease is spread by nose to nose contact, why are only certain animals affected. Why doesn't the whole heard have the disease. There in contact everyday with each other. I believe that nutrition and quality food has a lot to do with the health of any animal heard.

We the people spoke and were heard clearly 2007-2009. This is why support SB 2137.

Sincerely,



Jeff Jacob

I 100% support bill SB 2137, Not everybody has the resources or the land to plant food plots. So I feel that the supplemental feeding ban is taking away opportunity for some people. When opportunity is taken away interest is lost. I also believe that a little more nutrition from supplemental feeding is beneficial for not just the deer but all types of wildlife. I have been a deer hunter for over 40 years. I hunted in the years when you lucky to see a hand full of deer in a season. And now the deer herd is as strong as ever. I have spent many years and hours in the field bowhunting and have yet to see anything negative with supplemental feeding of wildlife. Thanks Troy Cooper

Hello I'm in support of SB 2137 and ask  
the you reccomend a do pass on this bill.

Thank you

Jan. 10, 2025

Re: SB 2137

State Senators,

I respectfully ask you to vote "No" on SB 2137 which states "The department may not adopt a rule or implement a policy prohibiting or restricting the use of supplemental feed on private property for hunting a big game animal."

Supporting reasons for a "No" vote include:

- **NDGFD staff, entrusted to steward our public wildlife resources, need the ability to use a breadth of wildlife management tools to manage wildlife populations and their health.** Restricting their ability to manage deer feeding, whether as supplemental feeding or as baiting, would prevent their use of a critical tool in decreasing artificial concentrations of deer and thus transmission of diseases such as Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) that is spread by contact between animals.
- **History has shown that without the ability to manage deer feeding, CWD, an always fatal disease in members of the deer family, will increase in prevalence in their populations.** Wisconsin allowed baiting of deer far too long exasperating the issue - 64 of their 72 counties are now considered "CWD-affected". North Dakota would be wise to learn from their mistake and support what is needed to slow the spread of CWD, giving more time to learn how to potentially control it.
- **If artificial concentrations of deer are not discouraged, our state will pay the cost in multiple ways due to CWD's greater/faster spread and prevalence:**
  - o Increased financial cost to NDGFD due to more surveillance and management.
  - o Increased NDGFD staff time on the issue, which will also divert them away from other important tasks such as habitat projects.
  - o A decline in license sale funds that support NDGFD's budget and work due to an increasingly unhealthy and declining deer herd that causes fewer licenses to be available and fewer hunters to be interested.
  - o A decline in money spent by deer hunters in local communities because hunter numbers have declined.

Thank you for considering a "No" vote on SB 2137. Feel free to contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely, Jodie Provost (landowner, hunter, biologist)

I am asking the committee members to reccomend a do pass on SB 2137 and for the rest of the senate to please vote yes when it comes to the floor.

Thanks Derek Belle

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in opposition to SB2137. I am opposed to this bill because it removes a tool from the North Dakota Game and Fish agency to allow them to best manage North Dakota's wildlife. The agency is entrusted in managing wildlife for now and for future generations. I believe this bill will be a detriment to their ability to do so. I am concerned that this bill will not benefit wildlife at this time and will be a large obstacle to overcome in the future because it would require another passage of a law.

Thank you for your time and please oppose this bill.  
Jeremy.

I support SB 2137 and ask that the committee members recommend a do pass on this bill. As a landowner/rancher and outdoorsman I use feed to help get my grandkids involved and stay interested in deer hunting.

Yes on SB 2137

Thanks

To whom it may concern:

I, Brian Schmress, am a private landowner, as a landowner and tax paying citizen I feel like it is my right if I choose to hunt over supplemental feed. I am for baiting big game on private land.

Testimony in support of SB2137

Mr Chairman and the members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

I am writing to encourage you to support this bill. I have read numerous reports on this subject and do not agree with the North Dakota Game and Fish. Yesterday I observed a herd of deer feeding together closely in a stubble field. There were more deer in that one spot than there were at one of my bait stations several years back when it was legal for us to do it. Please vote yes on SB2137 and thank you for your time.

Darrell Olson  
1125 23rd St NW  
Minot, ND

I ask that you vote yes on SB 2137

As a landowner and father I ask that you recommend a do pass on SB 2137.

Senate Ag Committee members,

North Dakota has no room for ballot box biology. From California's Proposition 117 banning mountain lion hunting to the narrowly passed Colorado Proposition 114 requiring wolf reintroduction, it just goes to show how people with good intentions can be misguided, misinformed or elicited to vote based on strong emotions. They set aside the biology and science. Out-of-state groups can, will and have influenced voters and legislators. Utilizing the legislative process to circumvent a state agency is no different or less wrong.

State wildlife agencies do their best to make sound decisions based on biology and current science. They involve the public in the process when appropriate and this requires a delicate balance. When it comes to conservation, they need to place it atop the pedestal and sometimes overrule public opinion. CWD is here to stay, and it will require changes.

Any person still supporting baiting in CWD areas has done little to no research on CWD, simply reading the testimony for this bill highlights that fact. The Game and Fish Department has done their homework and is continuing to work with the public on this matter. They are also putting out education on the subject. Many who have read it will say it's not correct and attempt to debunk it, with minimal if any supporting information.

Regardless of which side you stand on baiting, we should all support the very agency that has been tasked with managing our most valuable resource. We need to respect the process and work with the agency. Good compromise will not make both sides happy, although they can live with the results. Cervids cannot live with CWD.

Thank you for your consideration,

Robert M. Illg  
Bismarck, North Dakota

I am strongly opposed to SB 2137. This country used to pride itself on our scientific achievements. We were one of the most knowledgeable, educated, and thoughtful nations, but now, if science suggests something might be happening that will offend or inconvenience us, our response is to dig our heads in the sand and pretend it's not real.

Let the professionals do their job and protect our deer herd so that my son can hunt healthy deer and someday his kids can hunt too.

My name is Travis Martinson and I fully support SB2137. I have been a resident of ND for 15 years and a current landowner. I have college education in biology, criminal justice, and taxidermy. I have completed a 1000-hour internship with the Minnesota DNR Enforcement Division. I have been a hunter my entire life. CWD is not the problem agencies are claiming it to be. EHD is the true killer. Placing supplemental feed will benefit the deer's nutritional needs all while allowing hunters to make more ethical shot placement. Game and Fish should be placing supplemental feed during the winter where it's needed to help our deer. I would be glad to hear that's where my tax, and license money is going. We should not be culling herds for a very rare disease. I would greatly appreciate it if Game and Fish would focus on EHD and winter herd management. Please pass SB2137. Listen to the sportsman.

Thank you!

Hello committee members I am writing this to letter in support of SB2137. I am a life long outdoorsman I have grown up bowhunting rifle hunting upland and waterfowl hunting and predator hunting. I have spent many hours in our great outdoors observing wildlife. As of recent the NDGF has implemented baiting bans on units in the western half of the state. This has ended a lot of opportunities for many people in the outdoors. Baiting will not spread disease any faster than one winter or one cycle of the rut. Deer are social animals that interact with one another year round. Our game and fish has tested 40,000 animals in 20 yrs and found 70 positive cases all of which were killed by bullets or arrows. The rules state you cannot hunt over bait but you can still bait. So the only time it spreads disease is when the hunter enters the equation. Without baiting my archery hunting will be a thing of the past and my children will never get to experience the thrill and exciting times Ive gotten to spend in the outdoor. Please suggest a do pass recommendation on SB2137 and lets enjoy the outdoors.

Damon Finley (701) 693-6754 [Damonhf12@icloud.com](mailto:Damonhf12@icloud.com)

I support SB 2137 and ask that you please vote yes on this bill in over 20 years of testing less than 1 percent of deer have been detected positive. So I dont feel that it is contagious and deadly as the NDGF is telling us.

Senate Agriculture Committee

I support passage of SB2137

My name is Adam Miller and I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 2137. My concerns are that this bill intends to interfere with the NDGF's ability to do the job they have been hired to do, which is manage the resource to the best of their ability. I do not want the legislature to remove tools at the NDGF's disposal. Let the people at the NDGF work without unnecessary interference.

Adam Miller  
North Dakota resident and hunter

Dear members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

Please join me in **opposing Senate Bill 2137**.

This bill would strip authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish to implement their CWD Management Plan by prohibiting the Game and Fish from banning baiting practices. This bill could also have far reaching effects in the future, in situations that that we may not even be able to imagine at this point.

Please continue to allow the professional and passionate employees of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department to make proper and educated decisions regarding our public resources.

Thank you,

Nevin Jenner

Williston, North Dakota

701-570-0250

01/13//2025

Written testimony in support of SB 2137

Dear Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

My name is Jeremy Handeland. I am a life long outdoorsman and resident of ND. I am also a father of 4 and live on a farm in northern Ward County. I am submitting a testimony today to share with you my stance on this bill. I am not going to get into the numbers or questionable science that backs the NDGF Dept's approach to CWD as I have read other testimonies that have explained this well.

What I am going to get into is my personal experience with my children losing interest in our ND outdoors and not wanting to bowhunt as much or at all anymore since the big game baiting restriction has been put in place a few years back. Today's generation of kids are built a bit different then past generations as everything they need to know is at the touch of a button. The baiting of deer allowed my kids to have instant action to keep their attention and enjoy our great ND outdoors. The 5 gallon bucket of corn would bring in pheasants, rabbits, squirrels, along with deer to help maintain the kid's interest. It also would provide a higher percentage chance of a clean/ethical shot for them if a deer came in that they wanted to harvest.

Please consider supporting this bill with your vote. The science, the numbers, or the common sense are not there to oppose, along with the loss of hunting interest we are creating for our future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

1/13/2025

SB-2137

SB-2137 brings back the logic to our big game hunting regulations in 2025. Right now, I can place feed legally 365 days a year for any species of big game on private land, but I can't hunt over that bait in the name of CWD. It makes zero sense.

I urge you to vote yes on SB-2137.

Jason Zins

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

As an avid sportsman, conservationist, biologist, and outdoorsman of North Dakota, I oppose Senate Bill 2137. **Wildlife management decisions need to be driven by science** and in the control of our North Dakota Game and Fish Department. If wildlife management decisions are not made in a wholistic manner, then we are not serving wildlife populations or our natural resources as well as we can or should be. I prefer to see the great wildlife and natural resource opportunities that we have in North Dakota managed by sound and informed decision making so that we can maintain it for years and generations to come.

I am opposed to the congregation of wildlife due to any human interference or causes and can appreciate the risk that is associated with it.

As a hunter and biologist, I urge you to oppose allowing baiting on private lands and the removal of ND Game and Fish control over such decisions.

Dear Committee,

My name is Tierney Martinson and I fully support SB2137. I am the mother of two young boys who love to hunt. I would like them to have the opportunity to archery hunt over supplemental feed. This will help them make a better shot at a closer range. This will also give them an opportunity to watch the deer up close. As a landowner and hunter myself I have done my research on the CWD narrative and have not seen any evidence to show that it is a true problem. Please allow hunting over supplemental feed on private land.

Sincerely, Tierney Martinson

Dear members of the Senate Agriculture and Veteran Affairs Committee,

I am writing in **opposition of Senate Bill 2137**.

I am an avid outdoorsman and a wildlife biologist by trade. I am neither for nor against hunting over bait. I am deeply concerned with the precedent this bill will set, if passed, to take the decision of managing our public resources out of the hands of the North Dakota Game and Fish (NDGF) and into the hands of politicians. Our wildlife populations are public resources and must remain managed utilizing science-based decisions in the best interest of the resources and outdoors community as a whole.

While I realize citizens will not always agree with decisions and regulations the NDGF makes, it's important to know that these decisions are made based on science and solely for the benefit of our natural resources and the citizens who utilize them via hunting, fishing, and trapping. When these decisions start being made by entities with biased agendas, the hunting community in general will suffer dire consequences in the future.

CWD and baiting is a hot-button topic in North Dakota. Information gathered and used by the NDGF is not based on skepticism and false assumptions, but in scientifically proven research and data. I urge you not to set the precedent of taking away the ability of the NDGF to make decisions on behalf of our natural resources. Our opportunities to hunt, fish, and trap are better off when the management of those resources is left in the hands of a politically neutral agency.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please vote **NO** on **SB 2137**.

Zach Peterson

Bismarck, North Dakota

January 13, 2025

Dear Members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

As an avid outdoorsman and wildlife biologist by degree, I strongly **oppose SB 2137**. This bill would remove authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF) to implement their management plans by prohibiting NDGF from banning baiting practices.

While I do not have a stance on baiting ethics, I do have a strong stance on legislation that seeks to restrict the ability of the state's wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties, that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations.

This is not a private property rights issue, this is about publicly owned wildlife, making this a public property rights issue. The hunting practices of a single user group does not outweigh what is beneficial for the entire public resource or the beneficiaries.

It is my stance that the NDGF does have the legal authority to ban feeding, and I would support joining most of the states in the nation and implementing a feeding ban in the units that are under baiting restrictions.

This bill is not in the best interest of the deer held in public trust, or the North Dakota public hunters who are beneficiaries of that trust. I feel SB 2137 to be in direct violation of the North Dakota constitution, the North Dakota century code, the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, the mission of the NDGF, and is a breach of the public trust doctrine.

I strongly oppose SB 2137 and I wish for you to do the same.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your **NO VOTE** on SB 2137.

Daniel S. Ackerman

Mandan, ND 58554

701-330-5781

I am writing to ask the senate members to pass SB 2137.

Please vote yes on senate bill 2137.

Please vote yes on senate bill 2137.

Please vote yes on senate bill 2137.

Please vote yes on senate bill 2137.

Please vote yes on senate bill 2137.

Please vote yes on senate bill 2137.

Please vote yes on senate bill 2137.

Please vote yes on senate bill 2137.

Please vote yes on senate bill 2137.

Please vote yes on senate bill 2137.

Please vote yes on senate bill 2137.

I fully support SB 2137 and ask that you pass this bill.  
Thanks

I fully support SB 2137 and ask that you pass this bill.  
Thanks

I fully support SB 2137 and ask that you pass this bill.  
Thanks

To whom it concerns,

On the topic of baiting wildlife, I believe it is a right as a landowner, hunter, and wildlife photographer, to use "bait". For me as a landowner, the right to bait is no different than posting property, so will some won't.

Thank You,  
Wayne Leno

### Testimony in Support of SB 2137

I, like many other sportsmen in North Dakota, are very passionate about hunting. Spending most of my spare time educating myself by observing deer or reading about them. Deer health is always a top priority to ensure a bright future for our sport.

Deer constantly like to be congregated and are very social animals. Making direct contact by communicating through licking branches and grooming one another. All this exposure naturally takes place year after year.

The data I have read shows in the past twenty years there have been 40,000 harvested deer and tested for CWD. In that time frame there have been 70 positive cases. Out of these 70, 69 were harvested deer and only one of them was a deer that was found dead. That is less than one percent of the tested deer testing positive for CWD. There have been living deer that are nine years old that test positive for CWD. This is double the age of the average deer in ND. Other states that have CWD and much higher funding for research continue to allow supplemental feeding on private property. Yet they continue to have steady population numbers nor huge outbreaks. The numbers in all the current and past research do not add up to needing restrictions on supplemental feeding.

Currently you can use supplemental feed if you want to get pictures but not if you have a weapon in your hand. Theories and speculation are taking away rights of hunters. Supplemental feeding should be a choice that is optional to all hunters. To limit educated, health conscious hunters who are trying to add nutrition to a deer's daily diet does not make sense to me.

Using supplemental feed could get more elderly and disabled people involved in the sport. It is a great way to get young hunters outdoors and let them enjoy watching wildlife in a close proximity. Another advantage is it helps position deer for a more ethical shot placement. It would be great to implement a proactive management plan where we can help aid in our deer herds diet. In my opinion there are more pros than cons to this argument.

There is not enough factual data to justify not allowing hunting over supplemental feed. I would appreciate it if you could reflect on what I have said and give back to sportsmen who are trying to enjoy their sport.

Please vote yes on SB 2137.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Jordan Dahle

Chairman Luick, Senate Ag Committee Members my name is Jamie Thompson a nineteen year old college student from Antler ND. My comments today are on SB 2137.

From the moment I picked up my first bow at our local archery club, I knew this sport would be a lifelong passion. It was not just about hitting a target—it was about discipline, respect, and the deep connection it fosters with nature. Over the years, bow hunting became a cherished tradition in my family, one that brought us closer together and taught us invaluable lessons about patience, responsibility, and the beauty of the natural world.

Bow hunting is not just a hobby, it is a way of life. It is a practice rooted in respect for wildlife and the land. However, it is also a pursuit that requires significant time, effort, and skill. For someone like me, who juggled a demanding highschool schedule filled with classes, sports, and involvement in multiple organizations, finding the time to sit in the field with my bow was a challenge. Most days, I left my house at 8:00 a.m. and did not return till 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. Despite my love for bow hunting, the time I could dedicate to it was limited. Now, as a college student three hours away from home and only able to return home two days a week, finding time to bow hunt has become even more difficult. Baiting allows me to make the most of those precious hours, giving me the best chance to fill my archery tag responsibility and ethically.

Baiting is a tool—a means to position deer for a clean, ethical shot. As a proficient archer, I know the importance of making every shot count. Bow hunting is not about luck or recklessness; it is about precision and respect for the animal. A well-placed shot ensures a quick, humane harvest, preventing unnecessary suffering. Baiting helps achieve this by drawing deer into a controlled environment where I can take a shot at a known yardage, one I have practiced countless times.

Without baiting, hunters often face unpredictable circumstances. Deer may appear at odd angles or distances, increasing the likelihood of a poor shot. For someone with limited time—whether it is a busy high school schedule or a college student who can only hunt on weekends—baiting reduces these variables and ensures that every opportunity in the field is a responsible one.

Bow hunting is about more than harvesting a deer. It is about the memories made along the way—the quiet moments in the stand, the laughter shared with family, and the profound sense of peace that comes from being immersed in nature. Some of my fondest memories are sitting in the stand with my dad, playing a few good games of rummy while we waited for a deer to appear, or giggling with a friend even though we knew we were supposed to stay quiet. These moments remind me that bow hunting is not just a sport; it is a bond that ties us to each other and to the land.

I will never forget the pride in my dad's voice when I made a clean shot on a buck and he said "Nice shot, kid, you got him," followed by a fist bump. Or the excitement in my brothers' voices when they heard the news: "Your sister got her buck." These moments are etched into my heart, and they are a testament to the joy and connection that bow hunting brings to families.

Bow hunting also provides a rare opportunity to connect with nature on a profound level. Sitting in the stand, you notice things you might otherwise overlook—the way the wind dances through the trees, the songs of birds as they flit about, and the quiet grace of a deer as it moves through the field. These moments remind us of the beauty and fragility of the world around us, teaching us to appreciate and protect it.

Baiting plays a role in this connection. By drawing deer into a specific area, it allows hunters to observe them up close, to study their behaviors and movements. This deepens our respect for the animals we hunt and reinforces the importance of ethical practices.

For me, baiting is not about taking shortcuts; it is about making the most of the time I have while ensuring that every shot is ethical and humane. As a high school student with a packed schedule, I did not have the luxury of spending hours upon hours in the field. Now, as a college student living three hours away from home and spending five out of the seven days on campus, my time to hunt is even more limited. Baiting allows me to hunt responsibly, giving me the best chance to succeed without compromising the principles of bow hunting. It is a tool that helps level the playing field for hunters like me, who are committed to doing things the right way but face significant time constraints.

Bow hunting is a tradition that goes far beyond the act of harvesting a deer. It is about family, memories, and deep connection to nature. It is about responsibility, respect, and the lessons we pass down to future generations. Baiting is an essential tool that helps hunters uphold these values, ensuring that every shot is ethical and every hunt is meaningful.

Allowing baiting in bow hunting is not just a matter of convenience; it is a matter of ethics, responsibility, and preserving a tradition that means too much to so many. Let us ensure that the future generations can experience the same joy, connection, and life lessons that bow hunting has given me.

In closing, I urge you to vote in favor of SB 2137.

Thank you, Jamie Thompson

As an avid outdoorsman im writing to ask the committee members to recommend a do pass on SB 2137  
Than you  
Josh Johnston

I, Jeremy Wittenberg, favor this bill as a life long hunter and outdoorsmen. I love spending time with my family and hunting is our favorite time of the year.

Please pass this bill.

Thank you,  
Jeremy Wittenberg

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## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

FBI Phoenix Field Office  
30 May 2019  
[REDACTED]

### **(U//LES) Anti-Government, Identity Based, and Fringe Political Conspiracy Theories Very Likely Motivate Some Domestic Extremists to Commit Criminal, Sometimes Violent Activity**

(U) LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE: The information marked (U//LES) in this document is the property of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and may be distributed within the federal government (and its contractors), U.S. intelligence, law enforcement, public safety or protection officials, and individuals with a need to know. Distribution beyond these entities without FBI authorization is prohibited. Precautions should be taken to ensure this information is stored and/or destroyed in a manner that precludes unauthorized access. Information bearing the LES caveat may not be used in legal proceedings without first receiving authorization from the originating agency. Recipients are prohibited from subsequently posting the information marked LES on a website on an unclassified network without first obtaining FBI approval.

(U) Domestic extremists employ a number of indicators, some of which may be criminal and others which may constitute the exercise of rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the US Constitution. The FBI is prohibited from engaging in investigative activity for the sole purpose of monitoring the exercise of constitutional rights.

(U//FOUO) The FBI assesses anti-government, identity based, and fringe political conspiracy theories<sup>a, b</sup> very likely<sup>c</sup> motivate some domestic extremists, wholly or in part, to commit criminal and sometimes violent activity. The FBI further assesses in some cases these conspiracy theories very likely encourage the targeting of specific people, places, and organizations, thereby increasing the likelihood of violence against these targets. These assessments are made with high confidence,<sup>d</sup> based on information from other law enforcement agencies, open source information, court documents, human sources with varying degrees of access and corroboration, and FBI investigations.

(U//FOUO) One key assumption driving these assessments is that certain conspiracy theory narratives tacitly support or legitimize violent action. The FBI also assumes some, but not all individuals or domestic extremists who hold such beliefs will act on them. The FBI assesses these conspiracy theories very likely will emerge, spread, and evolve in the modern information marketplace, occasionally driving both groups and individual extremists to carry out criminal or violent acts. Indicators that may lead to revised judgements or cause a change in the confidence level associated with this assessment include a lack of conspiracy theory-driven criminal or violent activity in the near to long term or significant efforts by major social media companies and websites to remove, regulate, or counter potentially harmful conspiratorial content.

<sup>a</sup> (U) See Appendix A: Defining Conspiracy Theories.

<sup>b</sup> (U) For an explanation of these terms and a description of all conspiracy theories referenced in this intelligence bulletin, see Appendix B: Prominent Anti-Government, Identity Based, and Fringe Political Conspiracy Theories.

<sup>c</sup> (U) See Appendix C: Expressions of Likelihood.

<sup>d</sup> (U) See Appendix D: Confidence in Assessments and Judgments Based on a Body of Information.

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**(U) Source Summary Statement**

(U//FOUO) This intelligence bulletin draws upon a wide body of reporting derived from other law enforcement agencies, open source information, documentary sources, human source reporting with varying degrees of access, and FBI investigations from 15 January 2008 to 30 January 2019. Reporting from other law enforcement agencies and open source information was deemed the most critical in supporting the key analytic judgements in this paper. News articles provided contextual details of various incidents and background on specific conspiracy theories not contained in law enforcement reporting, while academic publications aided in clearly defining the topic, limiting the scope of the paper, and developing the key analytic judgments. Documentary sources consisting of plea agreements, a Court of Appeals Opinion, a criminal complaint, and an indictment provided additional details concerning the incidents discussed, including the charges brought against the perpetrators and, in some cases, the conspiracy theory-based motives of their actions. The use of reporting derived from human sources and FBI investigations was limited, although these sources did provide intelligence that corroborated open source information. Human sources included an established human source with indirect access, much of whose reporting since 2014 has been corroborated, a liaison source with indirect access, a limited history of reporting, and extensive knowledge of domestic extremist groups throughout the United States, and a member of the public with indirect access, reporting for the first time, and whose reliability cannot be determined. The intelligence encompassed within this intelligence bulletin was collected between 1 November 2013 and 30 January 2019 and is current as of 31 January 2019.

**(U//LES) Anti-Government, Identity Based, and Fringe Political Conspiracy Theories Very Likely Motivate Some Domestic Extremists to Commit Criminal or Violent Activity**

(U//LES) The FBI assesses anti-government, identity based, and fringe political conspiracy theories very likely motivate some domestic extremists, wholly or in part, to engage in criminal or violent activity. This assessment is based on events in which individuals committed crimes, plotted attacks, or successfully carried out deadly violence and who—either before or after their arrests—attributed their actions to their conspiratorial beliefs. These events include instances in which the perpetrators intended to kill groups identified by such theories as hostile and malevolent, or to simply carry out dangerous, unlawful acts in an effort to draw attention to or expose a perceived conspiracy.

- (U//LES) On 19 December 2018, a California man was arrested after being found in possession of bomb making materials with the intent to construct an explosive device, according to information obtained from a law enforcement agency.<sup>1</sup> According to information obtained from a separate law enforcement agency, the individual stated he planned to travel to Springfield, Illinois and blow up a satanic temple monument at the Illinois Capitol rotunda in order to “make Americans aware of ‘Pizzagate’ and the New World Order (NWO), who were dismantling society.”<sup>2</sup>
- (U//FOUO) On 27 October 2018, an identified individual killed 11 people and injured several others at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, according to a criminal complaint filed in US District Court.<sup>3</sup> According to a copy of his social media postings obtained via open source, shortly before the attack the individual reposted a cartoon depicting the Zionist Occupation Government conspiracy theory and stated that

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the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society “likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can’t sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I’m going in.”<sup>4</sup>

- (U//FOUO) On 15 June 2018, a Nevada man used an armored truck to block traffic on the Hoover Dam Bypass Bridge, held up signs conveying a political demand, then fled into Arizona where he was arrested by Arizona Department of Public Safety, who found body armor, rifles, ammunition, and a flash-bang device inside his vehicle, according to law enforcement information.<sup>5</sup> According to a technical source with direct access, the man referenced the QAnon conspiracy theory directly and discussed related conspiratorial beliefs after his arrest.<sup>6</sup> According to an online news source deemed reliable, he sent letters from jail containing a distinctive QAnon slogan to President Trump and other officials claiming he wanted to expose government corruption and lies.<sup>7</sup>
- (U) On 27 October 2016, two men were arrested in Georgia on drug charges and found to be stockpiling weapons, ammunition, and other tactical gear in preparation to attack the government-funded research facility in Alaska known as the High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP), according to information obtained from another law enforcement agency.<sup>8</sup> According to subject interviews by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), the men became upset after watching videos online about the imposition of martial law and other government conspiracies.<sup>9, 10</sup> One of the men, who claimed the government was using HAARP to control the weather and prevent humans from talking to God, also made references to the United Nations (UN) invading America and sacrifices occurring at a New World Order church, according to the same source.<sup>11</sup>
- (U//FOUO) On 1 November 2013, an identified individual shot and killed one Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officer and wounded several others at Los Angeles International Airport, according to an FBI investigation.<sup>12</sup> Before the attack, the individual wrote a letter expressing his desire to kill TSA personnel, who he associated with the New World Order, according to a plea agreement filed in US District Court.<sup>13</sup>

### **(U//LES) Anti-Government, Identity Based, and Fringe Political Conspiracy Theories Very Likely Encourage the Targeting of Specific People, Places, and Organizations**

(U//LES) The FBI assesses in some cases anti-government, identity based, and fringe political conspiracy theories very likely encourage the targeting of specific people, places, and organizations, thereby increasing the risk of extremist violence against such targets. This assessment is based on several incidents where individuals threatened, assaulted, or plotted to attack entities they perceived as being linked to or involved with an alleged conspiracy. This targeting occurs when promoters of conspiracy theories, claiming to act as “researchers” or “investigators”, single out people, businesses, or groups which they falsely accuse of being involved in the imagined scheme. These targets are then subjected to harassment campaigns and threats by supporters of the theory, and become vulnerable to violence or other dangerous acts.

- (U//LES) On 29 May 2018, the leader of an unofficial, local veterans aid group claimed to have discovered a child sex trafficking camp on privately owned land in Tucson, Arizona, according to two news sources of unknown reliability.<sup>14, 15</sup> After local law

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enforcement investigations discredited the claim, the leader repeatedly alleged a law enforcement cover up and referenced the QAnon conspiracy theory as he and armed group members searched for additional camps, according to multiple sources with varying degrees of access.<sup>16, 17, 18, 19, 20</sup> In addition, the leader and his supporters accused specific residents, businesses, and local officials of aiding or participating in child sex trafficking, according to two sources with indirect access.<sup>21, 22, 23</sup> The group also harassed, threatened, and doxed critics and opponents, according to multiple sources with varying degrees of access,<sup>24, 25, 26, 27, 28</sup> and engaged in criminal activities, according to an indictment filed in an Arizona county superior court.<sup>29</sup>

- (U) Following the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, conspiracy theorists who believed the shooting was a government hoax harassed and threatened family members of the slain victims, who they believed to be complicit, according to two online news sources deemed reliable.<sup>30, 31</sup> According to an FBI investigation, a Florida woman was arrested and sentenced in 2017 for sending death threats to a victim's father,<sup>32, 33</sup> and a Brooklyn, New York man was arrested in November 2015 after harassing another victim's daughter and fleeing from police, according to an online news source of unknown reliability.<sup>34</sup>
- (U) On 4 December 2016, a North Carolina man was arrested in Washington, DC after he entered the Comet Ping Pong pizza restaurant carrying an AR-15 rifle and a .38 revolver, fired shots at a locked closet door, and aimed his rifle at an employee. The man was motivated by the Pizzagate conspiracy theory, alleging that a child sex-trafficking ring involving nationally known political figures was operating from inside the restaurant, according to a plea agreement filed in US District Court.<sup>35</sup>
- (U) On 10 April 2015, a Tennessee man was arrested for plotting to attack an Islamic community near Hancock, New York known as Islamberg, according to an FBI investigation.<sup>36</sup> According to a US Court of Appeals Opinion, inaccurate news reporting about Islamberg had surfaced in recent years, including a story suggesting the community supported terrorism. The man became obsessed with Islamberg, believing that its residents were plotting to attack New York City, and in February 2015 he began attempts to recruit others to join his attack.<sup>37</sup>

### (U) Perspective

(U) Although conspiracy theory-driven crime and violence is not a new phenomenon, today's information environment has changed the way conspiracy theories develop, spread, and evolve. The advent of the Internet and social media has enabled promoters of conspiracy theories to produce and share greater volumes of material via online platforms that larger audiences of consumers can quickly and easily access.<sup>38, 39</sup> Based on the increased volume and reach of conspiratorial content due to modern communication methods, it is logical to assume that more extremist-minded individuals will be exposed to potentially harmful conspiracy theories, accept ones that are favorable to their views, and possibly carry out criminal or violent actions as a result. The Internet has also enabled a 'crowd-sourcing' effect wherein conspiracy theory followers themselves shape a given theory by presenting information that supplements, expands,

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or localizes its narrative. The examples above demonstrate how crowd-sourced conspiracy theories can influence which entities extremists choose to target. These examples also substantiate concerns expressed by some researchers who believe a rise of conspiracism, fostered in part by the Internet, may be accompanied by a search for scapegoats—those believed to be the conspirators' allies, henchmen, or collaborators.<sup>40</sup>

(U//FOUO) This is the first FBI product examining the threat from conspiracy theory-driven domestic extremists and provides a baseline for future intelligence products.

### **(U) Analysis of Alternatives**

(U//FOUO) The FBI considered the alternative hypothesis that domestic extremists likely turn to violence only as a result of an underlying extremist ideology (such as militia extremism or white racially motivated violent extremism), whereas conspiracy beliefs held by such extremists do not play a role in their mobilization to violence. The FBI deemed this alternative to be less likely because these conspiracy beliefs have motivated, at least in part, several high profile violent acts, or have influenced the perpetrators—to the extent that they attributed their actions to their conspiratorial beliefs before or after their arrests. In addition, academic research indicates conspiracy beliefs are not only prevalent and influential in domestic extremist circles and among those with extreme political views, but often serve to magnify and exacerbate existing extremist sentiments. One indicator that would increase the likelihood of this alternative hypothesis is the absence or decrease in incidents over the long term in which domestic extremists engage in violent acts on the basis of their conspiracy beliefs.

### **(U) Outlook**

(U//FOUO) The FBI assesses anti-government, identity based, and fringe political conspiracy theories very likely will emerge, spread, and evolve in the modern information marketplace over the near term, fostering anti-government sentiment, promoting racial and religious prejudice, increasing political tensions, and occasionally driving both groups and individuals to commit criminal or violent acts. Because some conspiracy theories are highly partisan in nature, political developments, including those surrounding major election cycles such as the 2020 presidential election, likely will impact the direction of these conspiracy theories and the potential activities of extremists who subscribe to them over the long term. Another factor driving the intensity of conspiracy theorizing in the United States, and the subsequent threat from conspiracy-minded extremists, is the uncovering of real conspiracies or cover-ups involving illegal, harmful, or unconstitutional activities by government officials or leading political figures. Indicators that these scenarios are emerging include disrupted plots or successful attacks against popular conspiracy theory targets, such as government facilities, synagogues, mosques, or partisan political figures. Additionally, reports of a sudden rise in threats and unfounded accusations against a given individual or business may indicate impending conspiracy theory-driven crime or violence.

### **(U) Intelligence Requirements**

(U) FBI National Standing Collection Requirements

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- (U//FOUO) USA-TERR-CTD-SR-0711-18
- (U//FOUO) USA-TERR-CTD-SR-0401-16

(U) This intelligence bulletin was prepared by the Phoenix Field Office of the FBI. Comments and queries may be addressed to the Phoenix Field Office Field Intelligence Group at [REDACTED]

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**(U) Appendix A: Defining Conspiracy Theories**

(U) Although many conspiracy theories appear benign or inconsequential, others create serious risks. Throughout history, such conspiracy theories have fueled prejudice, witch-hunts, genocide, and acts of terrorism.<sup>e</sup> In the context of domestic terrorism, extremists often view the activities of alleged conspirators as an existential threat that can only be stopped through drastic, or even violent means. The definitions and notes below are meant to inform discussions within law enforcement as they relate to potentially harmful conspiracy theories and domestic extremism.

(U) A *conspiracy theory* is an attempt to explain events or circumstances as the result of a group of actors working in secret to benefit themselves at the expense of others.<sup>f</sup> Conspiracy theories typically allege wrongdoing by powerful others (for example, public officials, business executives, scientists) or societally marginalized groups (for example, Muslims, Jews), and are most prevalent among individuals with extreme political views.<sup>g</sup> Some conspiracy theories point to weak circumstantial evidence, but ignore stronger evidence that would refute their claims.<sup>h, i</sup> Consequently, they are usually at odds with official or prevailing explanations of events.<sup>j</sup> While a conspiracy theory refers to an allegation that may or may not be true, a *conspiracy* is a true causal chain of events. Real conspiracies involving illegal, antidemocratic, or harmful activities by high-level government officials and political elites have been exposed in the past and it has been argued that such plots have encouraged conspiracism in society.<sup>k</sup>

(U) Relying on the premises that nothing happens by accident, nothing is as it seems, and everything is connected, conspiracy theorists tend to view every bad outcome as the result of an intentional decision by an evil actor, dismiss disconfirming evidence as “fabricated” by the conspirators, and connect a wide range of seemingly unrelated occurrences to suggest a larger plot.<sup>l</sup> Despite sharing key characteristics and at times featuring similar themes and intersecting plots, conspiracy theories vary greatly in their scope. Some are narrowly focused on a particular event or set of events whereas others suggest broad, expansive narratives that link multiple conspiracies in complex ways to portray a group of evil actors working to manipulate society on a global scale.

<sup>e</sup> (U) Journal article; *Advances in Political Psychology*; “Understanding Conspiracy Theories”; 20 March 2019; p. 3; Journal is a peer reviewed academic journal. Author received pre-publication version of article on 30 January 2019.

<sup>f</sup> (U) Book; *American Conspiracy Theories*; 2014; p. 32; The authors are associate professors of political science at the University of Miami.

<sup>g</sup> (U) Journal article; *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, Volume 6, Issue 5; “Political Extremism Predicts Belief in Conspiracy Theories”; 12 January 2015; pp. 570-578; Journal is a peer-reviewed academic journal that covers research in social and personality psychology.

<sup>h</sup> (U) Paper; American Political Science Association Annual Meeting; “The Determinants of Belief in Conspiracy Theories”; 30 August 2012; p. 5; The American Political Science Association is a professional organization of scholars and researchers in the field of political science.

<sup>i</sup> (U) Working paper; George Washington University Program on Extremism; “Conspiracy Theories in the Patriot/Militia Movement”; May 2017; pp. 13-14; The George Washington University Program on Extremism provides analysis on issues related to violent and non-violent extremism.

<sup>j</sup> (U) Journal article; *Diogenes*, Volume 1, Issue 7; “Conspiracy Theories as Stigmatized Knowledge”; 25 October 2016; p. 2; *Diogenes* is a peer reviewed academic journal that publishes papers in the field of philosophy and the humanities.

<sup>k</sup> Book; *Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy, World War I to 9/11*; 2009; pp. 1-12; The author is a professor of history at the University of California, Davis.

<sup>l</sup> Book; *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America*; 2003; pp. 3-4, 6; The author is a leading expert on the subject and a professor of political science at Syracuse University.

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**(U) Appendix B: Prominent Anti-Government, Identity Based, and Fringe Political Conspiracy Theories**

(U) The conspiracy theories referenced in this intelligence bulletin have been categorized as anti-government, identity based, or fringe political because they assert secretive, malevolent acts either by an allegedly hostile and tyrannical federal government, by racial, religious, or social minority groups, or by political opponents.

**Anti-Government**

(U) *NWO*: A group of international elites controls governments, industry, and media organizations, instigates major wars, carries out secret staged events, and manipulates economies with the goal of establishing global rule.<sup>m</sup>

(U) *UN*: The UN is being used by an evil global cabal to erode American sovereignty, strip away individual liberties, and bring foreign troops to American soil in order to replace democracy with global tyranny.<sup>n</sup>

(U) *False Flags*: The official story surrounding a given terrorist attack or mass shooting is a lie; the event was staged or conducted by the government to justify encroachments on civil liberties.<sup>o</sup>

**Identity Based**

(U) *Zionist Occupied Government*: Jewish agents secretly control the governments of Western states and are conspiring to achieve world domination.<sup>p</sup>

(U) *Islamberg*: The small Muslim community near Hancock, New York known as Islamberg is a terrorist training camp; its residents, who pose as peaceful Muslims, are in fact Islamic radicals operating as a terrorist sleeper cell.<sup>q</sup>

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<sup>m</sup> (U) Website; Wikipedia.com; List of Conspiracy Theories;

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_conspiracy\\_theories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_conspiracy_theories); accessed on 26 February 2019; Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia with user generated articles whose reliability cannot be determined.

<sup>n</sup> (U) Working paper; George Washington University Program on Extremism; "Conspiracy Theories in the Patriot/Militia Movement"; May 2017; pp. 9-10; The George Washington University Program on Extremism provides analysis on issues related to violent and non-violent extremism.

<sup>o</sup> (U) Research paper; Demos; "The Power of Unreason: Conspiracy Theories, Extremism, and Counterterrorism"; 29 August 2010; p. 45; Demos is a think-tank based in the United Kingdom with a cross-party political viewpoint.

<sup>p</sup> (U) Website; Wikipedia.com; List of Conspiracy Theories;

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_conspiracy\\_theories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_conspiracy_theories); accessed on 26 February 2019; Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia with user generated articles whose reliability cannot be determined.

<sup>q</sup> (U) Online news article; nytimes.com; "They Created a Muslim Enclave in Upstate N.Y. Then Came the Online Conspiracies."; 28 January 2019; <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/28/nyregion/islamberg-ny-attack-plot.html>; accessed on 25 February 2019; The New York Times is a national daily newspaper.

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**Fringe Political**

(U) *Pizzagate*: High ranking democratic officials are or were involved in a child sex trafficking ring centered at the Comet Ping Pong pizza restaurant in Washington, DC.<sup>r</sup>

(U) *QAnon*: An anonymous government official known as “Q” posts classified information online to reveal a covert effort, led by President Trump, to dismantle a conspiracy involving “deep state” actors and global elites allegedly engaged in an international child sex trafficking ring.<sup>s</sup>

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<sup>r</sup> (U) Online news article; Snopes; “The Roots of ‘Pedophile Ring’ Conspiracy Theories”; 2 September 2018; <https://www.snopes.com/news/2018/09/02/roots-pedophile-ring-conspiracy-theories/>; accessed on 4 January 2019; Snopes is the oldest and largest fact-checking site on the Internet.

<sup>s</sup> (U) Online news article; Snopes; “The Roots of ‘Pedophile Ring’ Conspiracy Theories”; 2 September 2018; <https://www.snopes.com/news/2018/09/02/roots-pedophile-ring-conspiracy-theories/>; accessed on 4 January 2019; Snopes is the oldest and largest fact-checking site on the Internet.

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**(U) Appendix C: Expressions of Likelihood**

(U) Phrases such as “the FBI judges” and “the FBI assesses,” and terms such as “likely” and “probably” convey analytical judgments and assessments. The chart below approximates how expressions of likelihood and probability correlate with percentages of chance. Only terms of likelihood should appear in FBI products; the chart includes terms of probability strictly for comparison, as they sometimes appear in reporting of other government agencies. Furthermore, the FBI does not arrive at judgments through statistical analysis; and will not use terms of probability to convey uncertainty in external FBI intelligence products.

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<i>Terms of Likelihood</i>	<b>Almost No Chance</b>	<b>Very Unlikely</b>	<b>Unlikely</b>	<b>Roughly Even Chance</b>	<b>Likely</b>	<b>Very Likely</b>	<b>Almost Certain(ly)</b>
<i>Terms of Probability</i>	<b>Remote</b>	<b>Highly Improbable</b>	<b>Improbable (Improbably)</b>	<b>Roughly Even Odds</b>	<b>Probable (Probably)</b>	<b>Highly Probable</b>	<b>Nearly Certain</b>
	<b>1-5%</b>	<b>5-20%</b>	<b>20-45%</b>	<b>45-55%</b>	<b>55-80%</b>	<b>80-95%</b>	<b>95-99%</b>

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**(U) Appendix D: Confidence in Assessments and Judgments Based on a Body of Information**

(U) Confidence levels reflect the quality and quantity of the source information supporting a judgment. Consequently, the FBI ascribes high, medium, or low levels of confidence to assessments, as follows:

(U) **High confidence** generally indicates the FBI's judgments are based on high quality information from multiple sources. High confidence in a judgment does not imply the assessment is a fact or a certainty; such judgments might be wrong. While additional reporting and information sources may change analytical judgments, such changes are most likely to be refinements and not substantial in nature.

(U) **Medium confidence** generally means the information is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence. Additional reporting or information sources have the potential to increase the FBI's confidence levels or substantively change analytical judgments.

(U) **Low confidence** generally means the information's credibility or plausibility is uncertain, the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make solid analytic inferences, or the reliability of the sources is questionable. Absent additional reporting or information sources, analytical judgments should be considered preliminary in nature.

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**(U) Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> (U//LES) FBI; Case Information; 15 January 2019; 19 December 2018; “(U//LES) The Seaside PD reported they arrested [Name withheld] for possession of materials with intent to make a destructive device. [Name withheld] said he planned to build a bomb and traveling to Springfield, IL to blow up a satanic temple monument being displayed in the Illinois Capitol rotunda”; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a [Name withheld] assessment containing information from another law enforcement agency.

<sup>2</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 28 December 2018; 19 December 2018; “(U) The Seaside PD reported arresting [Name withheld] for possession of materials with the intent to make a destructive device”; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is a [Name withheld] assessment containing information from another law enforcement agency.

<sup>3</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 28 October 2018; 27 October 2018; “[TITLE REDACTED]”; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source [Name withheld] is the criminal complaint issued out of the Western District of Pennsylvania.

<sup>4</sup> (U) Website; Archive.today Webpage Capture; [TITLE REDACTED]; 27 October 2018; <https://archive.fo/k63LE>; accessed on 3 January 2019; Source is a text and graphical copy of [Name withheld] social media profile.

<sup>5</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 22 June 2018; 15 June 2018; “[TITLE REDACTED]”; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is a [Name withheld] assessment containing incident reports from Arizona Department of Public Safety (AZDPS) and Nevada Highway Patrol.

<sup>6</sup> (U//FOUO) FBI; Case Information; 22 June 2018; 15 June 2018; “[TITLE REDACTED]”; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is a [Name withheld] assessment containing a supplemental report by AZDPS with partial transcripts of subject’s jail calls, obtained through subpoena to the Mohave County Jail.

<sup>7</sup> (U) Online news article; Reviewjournal.com; “Suspect in Hoover Dam standoff writes Trump, cites conspiracy in letters”; 13 July 2018; <https://www.reviewjournal.com/crime/courts/suspect-in-hoover-dam-standoff-writes-trump-cites-conspiracy-in-letters/>; accessed on 28 January 2019; The Las Vegas Review-Journal is a major daily newspaper. Reporting in the article is based on statements from the subject’s attorney, court records, and letters written by the subject.

<sup>8</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 16 November 2017; 27 October 2016; “(U) Coffee County Sheriff’s Office Police Report - [Name withheld] (Part 1 of 2)”; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is a police report provided by the Coffee County Sheriff’s Office.

<sup>9</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 2 December 2016; 27 September 2016; “(U) Interview of [Name withheld] by ATF”; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is an investigative report from the ATF summarizing a custodial interview with [Name withheld].

<sup>10</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 2 December 2016; 27 October 2016; “(U) Interview of [Name withheld] by ATF”; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is an investigative report from the ATF summarizing a custodial interview with [Name withheld].

<sup>11</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 2 December 2016; 27 October 2016; “(U) Interview of [Name withheld] by ATF”; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is an investigative report from the ATF summarizing a custodial interview with [Name withheld].

<sup>12</sup> (U//FOUO) FBI; Case Information; 2 January 2018; 1 November 2013; “(U//FOUO) Timeline of Events - LAX Terminal 3”; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is a timeline of events compiled from multiple sources including surveillance video, telephone call recordings, police radio communications, interviews, and other FBI data.

<sup>13</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 15 September 2016; 1 September 2016; “(U) Guilty plea in captioned case”; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is the plea agreement between [Name withheld] and the United States Attorney’s Office for the Central District of California.

<sup>14</sup> (U) Online news article; Tucsonnewsnow.com; “[Name withheld] discovers disturbing abandoned camp in Tucson”; 31 May 2018; [https://www.tucsonnewsnow.com/story/38322543/\[Name-withheld\]-abandoned-camp-tucson/](https://www.tucsonnewsnow.com/story/38322543/[Name-withheld]-abandoned-camp-tucson/); accessed on 4 January 2019; Tucsonnewsnow.com is the official website for KOLD News 13, a local news channel. The article is based on reporting from associates of [Name withheld] with direct access.

<sup>15</sup> (U) Online news article; 12news.com; “VERIFY: Is there a child sex camp in Tucson?”; 8 June 2018; <https://www.12news.com/article/news/local/arizona/verify-is-there-a-child-sex-camp-in-tucson/75-562768168>; accessed on 24 January 2019; 12News.com is the official website for KPNX Channel 12, a television station

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covering Arizona-related news. The article is based on videos from the [Names withheld] page and statements from a Pima County Sheriff's Department spokesperson.

<sup>16</sup> (U) Website; [Name withheld]; 4 June 2018; [https://www.\[Name withheld\].com/TucsonPoliceDepartment/posts/10155545208458531](https://www.[Name withheld].com/TucsonPoliceDepartment/posts/10155545208458531); accessed on 24 January 2019; Source is a social media page associated with the Tucson Police Department.

<sup>17</sup> (U) Online news article; hcn.org; "Conspiracy theories inspire vigilante justice in Tucson"; 12 September 2018; <https://www.hcn.org/issues/50.17/politics-conspiracy-theories-inspire-vigilante-justice-in-tucson>; accessed on 25 January 2019; High Country News is an independent non-profit news media source covering issues facing the Western United States. Reporting in the article is based on statements from local law enforcement employees with direct access, interviews with members of [Name withheld] and with other members of the public with direct access.

<sup>18</sup> (U) Website; [Name withheld]; 17 January 2019; [https://www.\[Names withheld\] status/1086090064323440640](https://www.[Names withheld] status/1086090064323440640); accessed on 25 January 2019; Source is a social media page associated with [Name withheld].

<sup>19</sup> (U) Online news article; Motherboard.vice.com; "#QANON Conspiracy Theorists Are Hunting for 'Child Sex Camps' in the Arizona Desert"; 7 June 2018; [https://www.motherboard.vice.com/en\\_us/article/zm8ww8/qanon-conspiracy-theorists-are-hunting-for-child-sex-camps-in-the-arizona-desert](https://www.motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/zm8ww8/qanon-conspiracy-theorists-are-hunting-for-child-sex-camps-in-the-arizona-desert); accessed on 25 January 2019; Motherboard is a multimedia publication owned by Vice Media and focusing on stories related to technology and science. Reporting in the article is based on statements from a Tucson Police Department representative, other local and national news reporting, and videos and posts from the [Names withheld] page.

<sup>20</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 24 October 2018; 11 August 2018; "[TITLE REDACTED]"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is an officer from another law enforcement agency.

<sup>21</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 6 July 2018; 28 June 2018; "(U) RE: E-Mail regarding [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a liaison contact with indirect access, whose reporting is limited and some of whose reporting has been corroborated.

<sup>22</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 5 July 2018; 5 July 2018; "(U) Information on [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a liaison contact with indirect access, whose reporting is limited and some of whose reporting has been corroborated.

<sup>23</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 30 July 2018; 23 July 2018; "[TITLE REDACTED]"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is an established source with indirect access to the information, much of whose reporting has been corroborated.

<sup>24</sup> (U//FOUO) FBI; Case Information; 9 August 2018; 9 August 2018; "(U//FOUO) Threats Made by [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is a screen capture of a comment posted to social media by user [Name withheld].

<sup>25</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 6 July 2018; 23 June 2018; "[TITLED REDACTED]"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE; Source is a member of the public with indirect access who shared the information with the Pima County Sheriff's Department.

<sup>26</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 30 July 2018; 15 July 2018; "(U) Conversion to Full Investigation: [Name withheld]; AOT - DT Militia Extremism"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is screen captures of social media posts, online videos, and documents from other websites relating to the dox of local law enforcement officials.

<sup>27</sup> (U//FOUO) FBI; Case Information; 26 September 2018; 20 September 2018; "(U//FOUO) Threats made by [Name withheld] toward FBI"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is a video posted to social media websites containing threats made by [Name withheld] toward the FBI.

<sup>28</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 18 October 2018; 15 October 2018; "[TITLED REDACTED]"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; An established source with indirect access to the information, much of whose reporting has been corroborated.

<sup>29</sup> (U//FOUO) FBI; Case Information; 27 September 2018; 19 September 2018; "(U//FOUO) Pima County Superior Court Indictment"; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY; Source is the Pima County Superior Court Indictment of [Name withheld] and associates for criminal trespass and burglary charges.

<sup>30</sup> (U) Online news article; latimes.com; "In an age of 'alternative facts,' a massacre of schoolchildren is called a hoax"; 3 February 2017; <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-sandy-hook-conspiracy-20170203-story.html>;

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accessed on 4 January 2019; The Los Angeles Times is a national daily newspaper. Reporting in the article is based on statements from the father of a Sandy Hook victim and a letter to the White House from Newtown residents.

<sup>31</sup> (U) Online news article; TheGuardian.com; "Sandy Hook father [Name withheld] on death threats: 'I never imagined I'd have to fight for my child's legacy'"; 2 May 2017; <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/may/02/sandy-hook-school-hoax-massacre-conspiracists-victim-father>; accessed on 4 January 2019; TheGuardian.com is a British news and media website. Reporting in the article is based on an interview with the father of a Sandy Hook victim, a letter from the Newtown school board to the White House, and statements from [Names withheld].

<sup>32</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 3 April 2017; 3 April 2017; "(U) Arrest of [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is the arrest warrant for [Name withheld].

<sup>33</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 21 June 2017; 7 June 2017; "(U) Sentencing of [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is an FBI agent who was present at [Name withheld] sentencing hearing in US District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

<sup>34</sup> (U) Online news article; ctpost.com; "Sandy Hook 'truther' gets suspended sentence"; 18 April 2016; <https://www.ctpost.com/police/article/Sandy-Hook-truther-gets-suspended-sentence-7255482.php>; accessed on 7 January 2019; Ctpost.com is the official website for The Connecticut Post, a daily newspaper located in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The article is based on proceedings of the superior court in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

<sup>35</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 18 August 2017; 24 March 2017; "(U) Plea Agreement"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is a plea agreement filed in the US District Court for the District of Columbia.

<sup>36</sup> (U) FBI; Case Information; 23 April 2015; 10 April 2015; "(U) Arrest of [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is a copy of [Name withheld] arrest warrant, complaint, and affidavit.

<sup>37</sup> FBI; Case Information; 27 November 2018; 4 October 2018; "(U) United States Court of Appeals Opinion on [Name withheld]"; UNCLASSIFIED; UNCLASSIFIED; Source is an Opinion drafted by the Sixth Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals.

<sup>38</sup> (U) Book; *Web of Conspiracy: A Guide to Conspiracy Theory Sites on the Internet*; 2008; p. xi; The authors are former reporters and editors who have published earlier works regarding online news sources, one of whom teaches journalism at New Jersey City University.

<sup>39</sup> (U) Working paper; George Washington University Program on Extremism; "Conspiracy Theories in the Patriot/Militia Movement"; May 2017; p. 15; The George Washington University Program on Extremism provides analysis on issues related to violent and non-violent extremism.

<sup>40</sup> (U) Journal article; Diogenes, Volume 1, Issue 7; "Conspiracy Theories as Stigmatized Knowledge"; 25 October 2016; p. 6; Diogenes is a peer reviewed academic journal that publishes papers in the field of philosophy and the humanities.

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U//LES



Product Title: Anti-Government, Identity Based, and Fringe Political Conspiracy Theories Very Likely Motivate Some Dom

1. (U//FOUO) Please select customer type:  and function:

2. (U//FOUO) Please rate your satisfaction with each of the following:

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A
Product's overall usefulness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product's relevance to your mission	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product's timeliness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product's responsiveness to your intelligence needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. (U//FOUO) How do you plan to use this product in support of your mission? (Check all that apply.)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Integrate into one of my own organization's finished information or intelligence products | <input type="checkbox"/> Incorporate into training                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share contents with partners outside my organization                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Incorporate into planning and preparedness efforts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share within my organization  | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not plan to use                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve situational awareness   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:   |

4. (U//FOUO) How does this product add value to your mission? (Please portion mark comments.)

5. (U//FOUO) How could this product be improved? (Please portion mark comments.)

6. (U//FOUO) What is the primary intelligence source you rely on to perform your mission?

To help us understand more about your organization so we can better tailor future products, please provide:

Name: <input type="text"/>	Position: <input type="text"/>
Organization: <input type="text"/>	State: <input type="text"/>
Contact Number: <input type="text"/>	E-mail: <input type="text"/>

**Submit Feedback**

[Privacy Act Statement](#)

U//LES

REV: 28 August 2013

My name is Dallas rice and I am in support of supplemental baiting on private lands. Since baiting bans have been in place I have seen a significant drop in archery hunters. At local trophy nights attendance has dropped each and every since more and more units have been restricted. I do not believe someone should be able to tell me that I can not do what I want on private land that is not owned by the game and fish. I am still in a unit that allows baiting but it has been the hot topic to ban next. I take out retired vets and without this use of feeding they would not have the success they do have. One veteran has one lung and can not walk far. To spot and stalk is out of the question for many youth and elderly. Baiting not only helps with this cause but also helps for more ethical shots. Knowing the distance before hand helps the youth and everyone. There are more deer that are in the neighbors hay yards then are ever at my bait site. I have yet to ever see a sick deer caused by cwd from such supplemental baiting. I hope you consider passing this to allow private land owners the right to do what they want on there land.

01/14/2025

Written testimony in support of SB 2137

Dear Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

I am writing to show my support for SB 2137. The science is not there that confirms we have the potential for a CWD issue in the state of North Dakota. The current restrictions on hunting big game over bait have zero effect on the status of CWD. If the NDGF truly believes that CWD can or will be a problem in the future, I challenge them to use their resources to find some solutions. Testing, marketing questionable science, and restricting North Dakotan's freedoms are not solutions to CWD and never will be. Please support Bill 2137.

Thank you.

As a lifelong hunter I am asking that you support SB2137.

<https://medal.tv/clips/44943614/km1337S3dEFQD?m=1>

I am writing this letter in support of SB 2137. Game and Fish have tested 40,000 deer in the last 20 some years and have found 70 positive cases, and all have been killed by hunters. The rules state that I can bait anywhere or anytime but as soon as I pick up a weapon it somehow spreads CWD.

Another issue is keeping the youth interested. I have a 10 year old that started bowhunting this year and keeping him interested is tough. Taking hunting over bait away would probably be the end of it.

The biggest threats too our deer herd are winters, habitat, EHD, and the Game and Fish itself.

Please suggest a do pass recommendation on SB 2137

Thanks,

Jesse Suckut

To Whom it may Concern

While I do not have a stance on baiting ethics, I do have a stance on legislation or ballot initiatives that seek to restrict or control the ability of the wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties. Duties that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations, and as stated in Article XI, Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution, "Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good."

The North Dakota Game and Fish does not ban baiting in the whole state, just in units that have had positive cases of CWD. CWD is a real threat if measures are not taken to slow the spread. Other states have not taken CWD as a threat and now have deer herds that are being affected and as a result reduced opportunity for hunters.

The management of deer in North Dakota is not a private property issue. Wildlife is owned by all North Dakotans and not I individual.

For these reasons I urge you to vote NO on SB 2137.

Thank you

Dirk McWhorter

01/10//2025

Written testimony in support of SB 2137

Dear Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members

I am writing this in support of this bill. As a landowner I feel we should have the right to supplemental feed. We are already feeding and taking care of the wildlife year around. If that is either with food plots or just our agricultural land. The game and fish like to use CWD as a reason to not allow this. Which I believe is a poor excuse. Deer use a lot of the same watering holes and feed sources. I truly believe if it was a major problem in our state we would know. Supplemental feeding I believe is a great way to help our deer population, along with getting youth a chance to harvest and get excited about hunting.

Thank you for your time and consideration

To Whom it may Concern

While I do not have a stance on baiting ethics, I do have a stance on legislation or ballot initiatives that seek to restrict or control the ability of the wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties. Duties that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations, and as stated in Article XI, Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution, "Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good."

The North Dakota Game and Fish does not ban baiting in the whole state, just in units that have had positive cases of CWD. CWD is a real threat if measures are not taken to slow the spread. Other states have not taken CWD as a threat and now have deer herds that are being affected and as a result reduced opportunity for hunters.

The management of deer in North Dakota is not a private property issue. Wildlife is owned by all North Dakotans and not I individual.

For these reasons I urge you to vote NO on SB 2137.

Thank you

Brianne L McWhorter

To Whom it may Concern

While I do not have a stance on baiting ethics, I do have a stance on legislation or ballot initiatives that seek to restrict or control the ability of the wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties. Duties that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations, and as stated in Article XI, Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution, "Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good."

The North Dakota Game and Fish does not ban baiting in the whole state, just in units that have had positive cases of CWD. CWD is a real threat if measures are not taken to slow the spread. Other states have not taken CWD as a threat and now have deer herds that are being affected and as a result reduced opportunity for hunters.

The management of deer in North Dakota is not a private property issue. Wildlife is owned by all North Dakotans and not I individual.

For these reasons I urge you to vote NO on SB 2137.

Thank you

Greycee L McWhorter

1-14-25

Written Testimony in support of SB 2137.

As a Sportsman, Resident, and Landowner, I fully support SB 2137. Right now, in many units across the state supplemental feed can be placed anywhere, at any time of the year, in any amount, and someone can sit by it with a camera while deer and other wildlife eat with no worries about disease or CWD being spread. But according to the NDGF, the second they put the camera down and grab a gun or bow, the CWD threat magically appears and is an “endemic”. How? The opposition to SB 2137 will say we need to trust the “science”, but the NDGF doesn’t, or can’t, prove their own science and even go against it at times. The real threats to the ND deer populations are EHD, and winter starvation, NDGF even recognized this at one of the advisory meetings. Yet so much of their time, energy, and our money is focused on the CWD farse and placing of supplemental feed in the form of a Hunting Restriction.

As a private landowner and taxpayer in the state, I would like to be able to continue to help the deer herd, as well as other wildlife, by placing supplemental feed, and do so with no restrictions regardless of if I am hunting near it or not.

I ask for you to vote **YES** and pass SB 2137.

Thank you.

John Lien

Hello this Matthew Ellingson from the Glenburn area. I am in support of bill SB2137. This bill is one that I dont understand why its even a thing. If we can feed them all year why cant we hunt over it. Plus have you seen the size of the herds of deer that are 200-300. If CWD was such a big deal they would all be dead. You guys sit and make up your own rules that you dont follow. The head of game and fish need to be an elected position instead of an appointed one. If the game and fish really was concerned about cwd the whole state would have a ban on baiting, not just select units. Thats why this whole no hunting over feed is just a ban base on hunting ethics not real science. That is why I support bill SB2137. To give hunter the actual freedom to hunt how they want not how the game and fish mismanages feel is ethical.

Sincerely  
Matthew Ellingson

I am in favor of this bill for many reasons, mainly because this will not increase disease in deer.

As a lifelong outdoor enthusiasts that likes to spend as much time as I can hunting and fishing and making many memories doing so. Many of the memories being with my dad whose eyesight isn't what it used to be and can probably only make a 30 yard shot. Without the use of feed I may not be able to continue to make these memories with him. That being said I urge the committee members to reccomend a DO PASS on Sb2137

Thank you

I am a landowner, I love deer hunting, and I bait deer. However, I implore the legislature to oppose SB 2137. I lived and hunted in Wisconsin when CWD appeared and those were some tough years of hunting. No tags and no deer. Yes, the population eventually responded, 10 years later, at a lower baseline. I don't want this to happen in North Dakota. Let NDGF manage our public resource and prevent the spread of CWD. I will gladly give up baiting if it means keeping our herd healthy and available tags. What good is a bait pile without a tag or deer to hunt? Kill this bill so we can kill more deer.

Dear Members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs,

I am writing to submit testimony in opposition to SB 2137. I am a lifelong resident and outdoorsman. I feel as though we have seen this before during the last legislation with HB 1151. Politics should not play with the management of wildlife. Any time politics are involved in management of wildlife the only ones who lose are the wildlife themselves.

Please vote no on this bill and allow the NDGF to do their jobs accordingly.

Thank you for your time

Pat Weninger

SB 2137

I am in support of SB 2137 and hope you support this with a due pass.

Lance Doerr



January 14, 2025 at 8:11PM — Shared

### Do Pass on Senate Bill 2137

I would like to see the baiting restrictions for hunting during deer season removed. The NDGF is not following their own science in supporting their claims. Makes no sense to keep on with their CWD narrative. The money they spend to broadcast their false claims could be used to supplement feed the deer in the harsh winter months. Time to pull the reins in on the NDGF.

Sincerely

David A Lunde



Jan 14, Doc 1



/v/...



I am writing in support of SB 2137. Please pass this bill.

I am writing to ask the committee members to recommend a due pass on SB 2137. As I age and my eye sight is declining I can't make as long of shots as I once could. So I like to have the option to be able to hunt over feed if I need to so I can continue to enjoy time hunting with my sons so please pass this bill.

Thanks

I am asking that this bill please get passed and look at the actual numbers of less than 1 percent of deer have been detected of CWD and a bullet or arrow have killed all of them not CWD.

Yes on SB 2137

Trent Meyer

I am in support of this bill. The reason I'm in support of this bill is because of the lack of common sense coming from the game and fish. The fact that they are only restricting baiting while you are hunting over the bait makes no sense at all.

There is no science behind what the Game and fish are doing.

Jay Hettinger

Dear members of the Senate Agriculture and Veteran Affairs Committee, I am writing in opposition to Senate Bill 2137.

As an avid sportsman in ND, I have hunter deer for the last 50 years. Management of North Dakota's publicly owned deer herd needs to remain in the hands of the professionals of the ND Game and Fish Department. North Dakota's wildlife needs to be managed using science-based information, which the NDGFD does quite well. SB 2137 will remove an important deer management tool from the deer management toolbox.

SB 2137 would set precedent and, if passed, would take the decision of managing our public resources out of the hands of the NDGFD. Wildlife is not private property but is a public resource. These public resources need to be managed using science-based information and decision making for the good of the wildlife community, not just the convenience of hunters.

Please vote no on SB 2137.

To Whom it may Concern

While I do not have a stance on baiting ethics, I do have a stance on legislation or ballot initiatives that seek to restrict or control the ability of the wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties. Duties that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations, and as stated in Article XI, Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution, "Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good."

The North Dakota Game and Fish does not ban baiting in the whole state, just in units that have had positive cases of CWD. CWD is a real threat if measures are not taken to slow the spread. Other states have not taken CWD as a threat and now have deer herds that are being affected and as a result reduced opportunity for hunters.

The management of deer in North Dakota is not a private property issue. Wildlife is owned by all North Dakotans and not I individual.

For these reasons I urge you to vote NO on SB 2137.

Thank you

Greycee L McWhorter

As an avid outdoorsman and conservationist, I oppose Senate Bill 2137 of the 69<sup>th</sup> legislative assembly. This bill would strip authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish to implement their CWD Management Plan by prohibiting the Game and Fish from banning baiting practices. Just like the 2023 baiting bill (HB1151) we view this as ballot box biology.

I do not believe we should restrict or control the ability of the wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties. Duties that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations, and as stated in Article XI, Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution, *“Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good.”*

The public trust doctrine, supported by over a century of federal case law, makes it clear that all North Dakotans own the wildlife. This is codified in North Dakota Century code Section 20.1-03-03, *“The ownership of and title to all wildlife within this state is in the state for the purpose of regulating the enjoyment, use, possession, disposition, and conservation thereof, and for maintaining action for damages as herein provided.”* and *“The state has a property interest in all protected wildlife. This interest supports a civil action for damages for the unlawful destruction of wildlife by willful or grossly negligent act or omission.”*

Our fellow North Dakotans at the Game and Fish act as our trustees and it is their responsibility to manage the public’s trust assets (the wildlife), for the benefit of the trust corpus and all beneficiaries, both alive and unborn. With that in mind, this is not a private property rights issue, this is about publicly owned wildlife, making this a public property rights issue. And the hunting practices of a single user group does not outweigh what is beneficial for the entire public resource or the beneficiaries. Allowing baiting practices to continue in the face of a contagious and 100% fatal disease is not responsible care of our wildlife assets. We believe it is not only responsible, but necessary for the department to ban baiting practices where chronic wasting disease is found.

This bill would effectively undo over 15 years of management by the North Dakota Game and Fish to slow the spread of CWD. Since the first CWD positive deer was found in 2009, the department has spent 6 million dollars on 500 hay yard projects for landowners, to help keep animals from congregating on silage piles, hay yards, and other alternative food sources.

There is no doubt that baiting practices contribute to the spread of chronic wasting disease. Infectious prions can be found in man placed mineral licks, in the soil around those mineral licks, on feeders, and in bait piles. Research efforts have repeatedly

demonstrated horizontal and environmental transmission in animals who have prolonged and repeated contact with infectious materials. Research in Saskatchewan, Michigan, and Mississippi has found that man placed food sources represent by far, the largest aggregation of cervids and leads to the most focal contact with their environment. In other words, there is no activity that congregates deer more, putting them in direct contact with other deer and potentially contaminated environments, than artificial food sources. More than natural winter herding, natural food sources, bedding, and even breeding behaviors.

Additionally, there are no examples of high prevalence rates of CWD within a deer herd not having negative impacts to that population. Some are less significant, others more severe and dramatic, but all impacts are negative. This is backed up by multiple population studies GPS collaring thousands of deer.

While I sympathize with the hunters this change affects, and I understand changing long held practices can be difficult, the resource must come first. With over half the states in the nation having banned baiting and feeding of wildlife, we are confident that North Dakota hunters will adapt and overcome to be successful in the field just like the other states. We understand that baiting bans alone will not stop CWD, that deer do naturally congregate, and some of those natural occurrences will never be a variable managers can control in wild animals. But I also believe it is disingenuous to suggest that hundreds of bait piles and feeders on the landscape, being replenished repeatedly throughout the year, does not directly exacerbate the spread of CWD.

While I was disappointed to see the Department's concessions over the 2023 baiting bill, I understand their desire to try and work with hunters as best they can. While the ND Game and Fish department cannot ban feeding, unless for purposes of hunting, I agree that banning baiting where CWD is found removes the incentive to feed and will also lead to a reduction in feeding. It is our stance that the department does have the legal authority to ban feeding, and I would support joining a majority of the states in the nation and implementing a feeding ban in the units that are under baiting restrictions.

This bill is not in the best interest of the deer held in public trust, or the North Dakota public hunters who are beneficiaries of that trust. I find S.B. 2137 to be in direct violation of the North Dakota constitution, the North Dakota century code, the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, the mission of the North Dakota Game and Fish, and a breach of the public trust doctrine.

01/14/2025

Written testimony in support of SB 2137

Dear Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

I am writing to show my support for SB 2137. The science is not there that confirms we have the potential for a CWD issue in the state of North Dakota. The current restrictions on hunting big game over bait have zero effect on the status of CWD. If the NDGF truly believes that CWD can or will be a problem in the future, I challenge them to use their resources to find some solutions. Testing, marketing questionable science, and restricting North Dakotan's freedoms are not solutions to CWD and never will be. Please support Bill 2137.

Thank you.

I am in support of SB 2137 limiting the NDGF authority to control baiting in North Dakota. I feel the NDGF is cherry picking science to fit the narrative they want. I feel the NDGF thinks it is unethical to hunt over bait and they are using CWD to get rid of it. There is plenty of "Science" out there going against what they are doing in ND. Is there CWD sure but it is not the huge issue the NDGF is making it out to be! We lose more deer to EHD every year than we ever will to CWD. I feel this is governmental overreach and loss of rights/freedoms. If the NDGF is allowed to continue their goal of closing the whole state to hunting over bait than you will lose hunters and hunters do a lot for the wildlife.

I am opposed to SB2137 because I think professionals should be allowed to do their job of wildlife management. The health of North Dakota's deer is very important to me. I don't want the spread of CWD increasing the death of North Dakota's deer. I want my son to continue to enjoy the deer by our house on our walks and bike rides. Many thanks!

Joy Navratil

1/15/2025

In support of SB 2137

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kathryn Handeland. I am submitting a testimony today in hopes that you consider to be in favor of SB 2137. I fell in love with the outdoors and specifically deer hunting at age 4. In high school I found the passion of pursuing bow hunting. Now living away from home that passion has become hard. By restricting baiting, it has limited my time to be outdoors. Being away from family living in a different town it is extremely hard to participate in this activity as a female with baiting being taken away. Baiting allowed me to participate in a passion away from home. I no longer can participate in bow season; a season I had a huge desire for. I am asking you to please consider supporting this bill with your vote. Science and numbers are all on paper in support of this, what isn't part of the numbers is the desire and passion from many people that this has affected.

Thank you for your consideration.

I am in support of bill SB 2137.

I am in favor of SB2137. I have many reasons to support this bill, but the main one, that it comes down to, is it does not make any sense that you can feed wildlife, but as soon as you hunt over that feed, the deer contract CWD. WHAT?? There is a huge disconnect between the NDGF and the ND landowners and sportsmen and women. They put fear in our minds and then when asked to prove their findings, they can not show us the evidence. But, yet, they ask us to trust them. Sorry, we need to question everything and everyone. Total transparency.

Thank you,

Angie Kunkel

Members of the Senate Agricultural and Veterans Affairs Committee,

I support SB 2137. From 1900 to 2000 the people fed the wildlife to bring them back. Since 2000 there is a movement to ban any feeding. We supplement ourselves, our children, our crops, and livestock. What if we didn't?

A concerned sportsman,  
Dwight Grosz  
Hazen North Dakota

Dear Senate Energy and Resources Committee,

Please vote no on SB 2137. This legislature did the right thing last time by putting an end to this nonsense. I am almost 85 years old, I remember when there weren't much for deer in North Dakota. Just seeing a deer was a big deal! The game and fish has a tough job, but they've done a real good job over my lifetime in managing wildlife. Almost all hunting is better now than it was when I was kid. Way more wildlife. Let the professionals do what they were trained to do. Animals eating off bait piles is going to spread disease, this is common sense.

Thank you for your time,

Russell Wahl

Bismark, ND

I am in favor of SB2137. You can feed wildlife all you want but as soon as you hunt over the feed, they supposedly get CWD? Doesn't make sense. They won't show their proof of CWD prions, but we should trust them and their science. We own the land and yet NDGF tells us what we can and cannot do on said land. So much of this makes no sense at all. Stop the fear mongering.

Thank you,

Scott Wittmayer

I am writing this in opposition of 2025 SB 2137.

This bill will restrict the ability of the ND Game and Fish Department to do what science is telling them to do to slow the spread of CWD and other diseases through the ND deer population.

I feel if this bill passes it will set a bad precedent for future issues where a government department, like the ND Game and Fish, is paid by the ND residents to do a job based on scientific data. Only to not be able to do what science is telling them to do just because of, in this case, a group that cares more for their ability to easily kill a deer rather than truly caring for the health of the deer population.

This would be similar to the ND residents paying for all the senators and representatives to take their precious time to go to Bismarck, review all these bills every two years, give your opinion, but then we won't let them vote on the bills. This wouldn't allow them to make any changes for a better future and would be a waste of their time.

There is no argument that the concentration of any animal, including humans, will spread diseases faster. Eliminating baiting won't stop CWD but it will significantly slow it down. I have heard that an argument for this bill is that the Game and Fish isn't consistent on controlling baiting. Some units can bait, and others can't. That's not being inconsistent. They are restricting baiting only in units where there has been a documented case of CWD. That is why some units can and can't bait. That is being proactive and doing what makes sense on a step-by-step basis. They will also allow baiting again in a restricted unit if no documented cases of CWD are found again in that unit after several years.

Thanks for taking the time to read this.

Please vote no on SB 2137

Joe Keler

Members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

I am writing today to express my opposition to SB2137 and encourage you to give the bill a *do not pass* recommendation.

I am a husband, father of three, and an avid outdoorsman who enjoys spending time outdoors with my family. North Dakota is rich in outdoor opportunity, many of which are maintained and even enhanced by the dedicated staff working for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF). Their dedication and commitment to science-based management, putting the health of the resource first and foremost should not be legislated away from them.

Many in support of SB2137 talk of NDGF employees as though they are entrenched bureaucrats living in Bethesda or D.C. with no experience of how things work "in the real world." The reality is they live among us in North Dakota, share our values, raise their families as we do, and enjoy the same things we enjoy that make this state special.

I do not oppose baiting big game. I oppose legislation that will take away the tools that NDGF uses to maintain healthy wildlife populations. SB2137 will legislate away a tool that can be used to maintain the health of big game animals that are owned in trust by all citizens of North Dakota.

Please oppose the passing of SB2137.

Joseph Doll  
Bismarck, ND



**To:** Honorable Members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee  
**Re:** Senate Bill 2137 – Use of Supplemental Feed for Hunting  
**Position:** Oppose  
**Date:** January 15, 2025

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Honorable Members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I respectfully ask that you oppose Senate Bill 2137 (SB 2137), a bill that would strip the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (GFD) of their ability to promulgate certain rules regarding hunting. Specifically, SB 2137 undermines the GFD's ability to adopt or implement any policy that prohibits the use of supplemental feed for the hunting of big game animals on private land. In North Dakota, the GFD is the authority best suited to make science-based wildlife management decisions and should accordingly retain the ability to promulgate rules pertaining to hunting and wildlife.

Founded in 1989, CSF is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitals advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

State fish and wildlife management agencies have long been recognized as the primary and most well-equipped managers of fish and wildlife in their respective states. CSF firmly believes that decisions regarding the management of North Dakota's wildlife should be made by the GFD, which is comprised of capable wildlife biologists that understand the ever-evolving threats to wildlife species and can use this extensive knowledge to make timely adjustments through administrative action. It is crucial that the North Dakota GFD, the agency specifically established by this legislature to protect the storied fish and wildlife resources of North Dakota, retain their ability to practice science-based wildlife management.

CSF respectfully asks the honorable members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee to oppose the passage of Senate Bill 2137, thereby retaining the Game and Fish Department's authority to practice sound science-based wildlife management. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this issue. Should you require additional information on this, or other sportsmen's-related topics, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Jake Gould  
Coordinator, Great Plains States  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
jgould@congressionalsportsmen.org | 202-594-7973

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### Your Inside Connection to Outdoor Legislation

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1/11/25

Written Testimony in favor of SB 2137

I am writing today to show my support for SB 2137.

A very similar bill was a main focus of the 68th legislative session in HB 1151. This previous bill had overwhelming support of the ND citizens to the tune of 80% written testimony in support of it. It had a do-pass recommendation before failing on the senate floor from sudden political pressure/opposition

In the recent years there is growing concern for the ND GF departments best available science when it comes to managing CWD. The department has adopted practices such as culling ( poaching) approximately 50 deer in the Williston area to find a total of 0 positive tests and all the meat wasted in the name of best Available science furthermore the act of supplemental feeding is 100% legal across the entire state , year around. I can set up a tree stand and ground blind and photograph these big game animals year around over supplemental feed 365 days a year, however if I attempt to hunt with a weapon over feed it then becomes illegal/restricted in some deer management units. This hypocrisy is not a supplemental feeding restriction as the department calls it rather an overreach of a department trying to further restrict hunting in this great state. I ask you how can supplemental feed be placed 365 days a year statewide and not be a problem with spreading CWD until a person bring a bow or gun with? I respectfully ask the committee, house and senate to do what 80% of the residents of this great state want and that is support SB 2137

Thank you for your time

Josh Dinius, DPT

To Whom it may concern:

I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for SB2137. I have followed the public's reaction and the response of numerous game departments to the threat of CWD to the North American cervid population for very close to 50 years. I find it interesting after reading the testimonies of those opposing this bill the reason most oppose it is that they feel the management of this "threatening" disease should be left to the professionals. We are setting a precedent when passing a bill like this. I would further state however that ND Game and Fish and many other management agencies across the nation have dropped the ball when it comes to the management of deer (cervids) regarding CWD. We the people are allowing this to happen if we continue to permit the professionals to continue down the path of implementing unfounded restrictions, unrestricted culling of healthy herds, and fear mongering amongst sportsmen who deserve better. NONE of the models predicting decimation of herds or imminent spread of disease have happened. The only population of deer that are being negatively affected by CWD are from management practices. Culling operations are being implemented to reduce numbers of deer that aren't old enough to catch a cold let alone CWD. Unnecessary restrictions on carcass transport have driven people to stop hunting at a time when hunter numbers are in trouble. The science needs to be followed but when the people that are supposed to be following it don't, maybe it's time they are lead. I can go on and am tempted to, but I truly hope the testimony of myself and others is heard and truly appreciate the opportunity to give it.

Respectfully  
Kim Buntrock

Dear Committee,

My name is Eric Scapanski and I fully support SB2137. I would like to have the opportunity to archery hunt over supplemental feed. This will help them make a better shot at a closer range. This will also give an opportunity to watch the deer up close. As a hunter myself I have done my research on the CWD narrative and have not seen any evidence to show that it is a true problem. Please allow hunting over supplemental feed on private land.

Sincerely,

Eric Scapanski

I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 2137 of the 69<sup>th</sup> legislative assembly. This bill would strip authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish to implement their CWD Management Plan by prohibiting the Game and Fish from banning baiting practices. Just like the 2023 baiting bill (HB1151) I view this as ballot box biology.

I personally have a huge problem with legislation or ballot initiatives that seek to restrict or control the ability of the wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties. Duties that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations, and as stated in Article XI, Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution, "*Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be **forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good.***"

This bill would effectively undo over 15 years of management by the North Dakota Game and Fish to slow the spread of CWD. Since the first CWD positive deer was found in 2009, the department has spent 6 million dollars on 500 hay yard projects for landowners, to help keep animals from congregating on silage piles, hay yards, and other alternative food sources.

Research in Saskatchewan, Michigan, and Mississippi has found that man placed food sources represent by far, the largest aggregation of cervids and leads to the most focal contact with their environment. In other words, there is no activity that congregates deer more, putting them in direct contact with other deer and potentially contaminated environments, than artificial food sources. More than natural winter herding, natural food sources, bedding, and even breeding behaviors.

I understand that baiting bans alone will not stop CWD, that deer do naturally congregate, and some of those natural occurrences will never be a variable managers can control in wild animals. But I also believe it is disingenuous to suggest that hundreds of bait piles and feeders on the landscape, being replenished repeatedly throughout the year, does not directly exacerbate the spread of CWD.

I urge you to strongly oppose SB 2137.

Thank you,

*Steve Goroski*

Bismarck ND  
701-391-2665  
ND Sportsman and resident of this state

1/11/25

Written Testimony in favor of SB 2137

I am writing today to show my support for SB 2137.

A very similar bill was a main focus of the 68th legislative session in HB 1151. This previous bill had overwhelming support of the ND citizens to the tune of 80% written testimony in support of it. It had a do-pass recommendation before failing on the senate floor from sudden political pressure/opposition

In the recent years there is growing concern for the ND GF departments best available science when it comes to managing CWD. The department has adopted practices such as culling ( poaching) approximately 50 deer in the Williston area to find a total of 0 positive tests and all the meat wasted in the name of best Available science furthermore the act of supplemental feeding is 100% legal across the entire state , year around. I can set up a tree stand and ground blind and photograph these big game animals year around over supplemental feed 365 days a year, however if I attempt to hunt with a weapon over feed it then becomes illegal/restricted in some deer management units. This hypocrisy is not a supplemental feeding restriction as the department calls it rather an overreach of a department trying to further restrict hunting in this great state. I ask you how can supplemental feed be placed 365 days a year statewide and not be a problem with spreading CWD until a person bring a bow or gun with? I respectfully ask the committee, house and senate to do what 80% of the residents of this great state want and that is support SB 2137

Thank you for your time

Josh Dinius, DPT

January 15 2025

SB 2137

Mr. Charman and members of the committee,

My name is Mr. Matthew Peterson. I am a bow instructor, farmer, rancher, carpenter, nature conservationist, wildlife enthusiast, avid sportsman, etc. etc., I could fill a whole page with names but none the less. There are just a few points I would like to make.

Firstly, the value of the animals from one person to the next including the environment itself. As a rancher I raise my own beef to consume. Many do not have that luxury and have to find other ways to feed their family. Wild game is one of those. Some do not have the access to large acreage for hunting as others and this is where baiting helps ease that burden of feeding one's family. The environment has these animals included in the natural course of life from being food on the prairie to food on a table as well as the natural carriers for many things such as plants, diseases and insects.

Second, the health of the animals of concern and their predators, that being both disease and natural predators. The main predator I bring to concern is the coyote. They can diminish a herd in small amount of time so why are we limited in our pursuit of them to protect those herds while neighboring states having less restrictions? Why are we not more concerned with this problem that is so much more widespread? Others have mentioned the numbers tested and the very small percentage of positive tests. Why are those important results not easily found if we are to be educated on facts not just hearsay?

Third, I see these animals naturally gather. In the winter I have seen herds of 200 and sometimes 300 or more. During summer months I have seen many larger groups as well, very commonly 4-6 in open fields and more than 10 in well covered areas. Previous baited areas I personally have not seen more than 10-15. I believe these to be local animal and not ones that have traveled long distances.

I have read others concern with this bill on both sides of constitutional, ethical, moral etc... Is not the constitution there for the people? As times change so has our constitution both State and Federal in directing how law is governed by keeping in line with checks and balances.

I thank you for your time and consideration.



Mr. Matthew Peterson

My name is Jeff Whillock, I am a 71 YO, landowner, hunter, Veteran and voter. I submit this testimony in support of 2025 ND SB 2137.

The NDGF Chronic Wasting Disease policy is based on a document, partially funded by anti-2A and anti-hunter organizations, produced by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). The AFWA document promotes a Theory, (not scientific facts) peer reviewed by Wildlife agencies and others who stood to financially gain by its implementation. The AFWA document contains over 150 words such as : may, have the potential, likely, might, most possibly, suggests, etc.

20 years ago I had great respect for NDG&F, that is no longer the case. NDGF has implemented overreaching policies relating to CWD (which may have killed 1 deer) and completely ignored EHD which has killed tens of thousands of deer over the past few years. NDG&F does not follow it's own policies ie: several hunting units (2K1, 3B2, 2D,2C,and 2E) have NOT been included in the ban on hunting over supplemental feed. Additionally all units prohibited from hunting over supplemental feed can still hunt over water tanks. The NDG&F have used their overarching policy for many years and the incidence of positive tests have remained under 1%.

The testing for CWD is accomplished and controlled by individuals and organizations that have a monetary interest in positive results. There is no third party oversight.

NFG&F's position is that a "prion" is the cause of CWD, yet to this day they have not been able to show a picture of the mythical prion. They have shown renderings, not a picture, even though the ability to take pictures of an atom in a molecule is possible. There is no proof that CWD is contagious.

The NDG&F have driven a wedge between landowners and hunters by blaming poor hunting on landowners taking land out of CRP and removing shelterbelts and tree rows. Yet, instead NDGF have used the additional revenue (1 million+) to buy billboards and TV advertising when the money could have been spent on habitat improvement. NDG&F gives no credit to individual landowners who have, at their own expense, undertaken habitat improvement, clean water and yes, supplemental feed, benefiting wildlife on their property as well as adjacent properties.

NDGF ban on hunting over supplemental feed has had a negative impact on several categories of potential hunters:

1. Youth: Hunting over a small food pile allows them to take the time to make a controlled, safe and ethical kill. Many do not have the ability to beat the brush with a 9# rifle and make a safe ethical shot.
2. Handicap individuals: Wheelchair bound and other individuals who do not have the ability to go to the animals and need to bring animals to them.
3. Elderly: Same
4. Disabled Veterans: Same

Prior to the NDG&F ban on hunting over supplemental feed, I personally helped several of the above. I am proud that I helped 2 Veterans successfully harvest game as their last hunt, they passed before they received another hunting license

When asked about the impact on the above categories of hunters, the NDG & F response was "too bad for them".

In closing I believe that the NDG&F were acting in good faith at the beginning of this CWD hoax, just as we were all acting in good faith at the beginning of Covid 19. The problem is the CWD hoax became monetized and the NDG&F cannot, on their own, let go of the money. They are lying to us and we know it, the sad part if they are lying to us and THEY KNOW IT.

Jeff Whillock,

1/17/2025

Written Testimony in support of SB 2137

Dear Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

I am writing today to show my support of SB 2137. This Bill would not allow the ND Game and Fish department to impose a rule or policy that would prohibit the use of supplemental feed on private property for the purposes of big game hunting.

I urge you to look at the full body of the testimony for this bill, as well as a 2023 bill (HB 1151). Most North Dakota voters support these bills. The 2023 Bill passed the house easily and came out of the senate committee with a Do Pass recommendation. Politics came into play at that stage, and it failed on the senate floor. This was very disappointing to see so many politicians going against what their constituents believe. You all are elected to represent the voices of the public. This vote in 2023 was not representative of our voices.

The scientific evidence presented from the opposition is very one sided and does not lead to a clear conclusion. Baiting restrictions and deer culling have been utilized as “management” for decades in other states and has had no measurable impact on CWD prevalence and/or spread. They will not listen to or even consider studies that have results contrary to their narrative. Anytime a group is not open to hearing the opposing viewpoint or looking at data that contradicts their data it is not “science” at that point. Questioning and analyzing should be encouraged when trying to come up with science-based answers. Simply shutting the contrarian viewpoints down makes me question the science even more. If you cannot argue your viewpoints with facts and data while removing emotion, you do not have a scientific argument. You have an opinion or emotional based suggestion.

Hunter recruitment and retention needs to be at the forefront of the outdoor community. While most of the hunting I participate in does not involve baiting, I would like to be able to use it as a tool to keep my kids engaged in hunting. Using bait to help them get a controlled shot situation on their first couple big game kills will go a long way to keep them interested in the outdoors. Having a positive first experience will get them hooked for the rest of their life.

From the lens of private property rights, I also have a tough time agreeing with the Game and Fish practices. I have feeders out for the wildlife all year on my land, but it only becomes a problem if I decide to hunt near it? A vast majority of folks are going to feed wildlife whether they are in a banned unit or not. The ban only applies to hunting, it does not apply to feeding. I think this is why so many landowners have an issue with this hunting restriction. Feeding is perfectly legal anytime, anywhere, and any volume. Hunting near it is not. It does not make any sense scientifically.

Our Game and Fish is against baiting from an “ethical” standpoint. They are simply using CWD as the vessel to push their ethics onto everyone in our state while using “science” as their argument. They have tried in the past to ban feeding of wildlife and failed. They are simply side stepping that failure by banning a method of take.

If CWD had a measurable detrimental impact on deer numbers and baiting was the clear reason behind the spread of CWD, I would be the first person to scream for a ban on all baiting and feeding. If we are trying to discourage the “artificial concentration of deer” to slow the spread, why is the Game and Fish planting food plots all over the state still? That practice encourages concentration as well. Why are they not banning the use of food plots? It is also hard to take them seriously when I’ve witnessed employees of that agency using feed in a CWD unit.

EHD has a clear impact on our deer numbers. In 2021 and 2024 we found hundreds of dead deer in our hunting areas that died from EHD. In the decades they have tested for CWD, they have found only one deer that has died with CWD that was not a hunter caused mortality. For a supposedly “always fatal” disease you would think that number would be much higher.

While in most cases I do not agree with “ballot box biology”, when the Game and Fish oversteps, they need to be kept in check. They have refused to listen to both sides of this argument in the name of their “science”, so this is what is has come down to. They have refused to reach common ground or come up with a compromise on this issue. The public is holding them accountable for a regulation they do not agree with that is based on science that is not definitive.

Thank you for considering a “Yes” vote on SB 2137. I appreciate your time and consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

Jacob Wheeling

Gavin Ponzer. Towner, ND.

Deer dont know the boundaries of units or county/state lines; no animals do, so they will cross units no matter what. Deer are going to go to the food plots regardless of where they are located. It is unfair for hunters to not be able to bait because CWD can spread very efficiently, so if there were to be another outbreak, all of the deer in that area could be at risk for contracting CWD, so being able to control the deer population would be a positive thing. Please vote to allow baiting for hunting. Vote yes on SB 2137

Schale Welstad. Upham, ND.

Baiting should be allowed because the fact that I am a 16 year old that likes to bow hunt and baiting gives a much better chance of harvesting a deer instead of just hoping that a deer walks across where I am seated. Hunting is a great recreation activity and it can be very frustrating at times when you rely on pure luck and hope that a deer will come through your area. Please vote to allow baiting.

Blake Rosencrans. Towner, ND.

Baiting should be allowed in our unit because it allows us to get closer to the animal for a more lethal shot, which reduces the risk of wounding the animal. Especially during rut when deer are always on the move, its harder to take comfortable shots with a compound bow. Please vote in favor of passing SB 2137.

Lane Martodam. Willow City, ND.

Baiting should be allowed because where we live there are a bunch of farmland so it impossible to coordinate/pattern the deer because they have so many places they could go to get food and when you dont own a lot of land it can be pretty tough on trying to get the deer to even come on your property. Please vote to legalize supplemental feed for hunting. Vote yes and pass SB 2137.

Taylor Schmitt. Towner, ND.

My name is Taylor Schmitt, Im 17 years old and I am a frequent hunter. I believe that we should be able to bait because hunting is not only a recreation activity, but it is a source of food. With food prices increased like many other prices, deer can be a sufficient source of food. Supplemental feeding for hunting raises the chance of individuals and families the opportunity to provide and to have a successful hunt. Please vote to allow baiting for hunting.

I support SB 2137 and ask that a recommendation of DO PASS gets made. the numbers don't back up the claims that are being made and the CWD narrative is based off a hypothesis.

Braden Martin

Testimony

I am in favor of the continued ability to feed deer.

In regards to SB2137, a bill relating to the use of supplemental feed for hunting. As an avid outdoorsman and landowner I would strongly urge you to vote yes. Currently supplemental feeding is allowed for any activity except during the act of hunting. As an outdoorsman I find this very confusing as we are told this is done to prevent the spread of CWD. I personally feel that our ND game and fish has not proven that this ban provides substantial mitigation pertaining to CWD or the prevention of CWD. I also feel strongly that CWD is not what has created a decline in our deer population in recent years , instead I feel EHD and hard winters have been to blame. Yet we hear nothing from ND game and fish about these. I also feel the use of supplemental feed does help overall herd health during harsh winters . As a landowner I feel it is an overreach by the ND game and fish and goes against property rights. Many groups who oppose this say it is not the legislatures job to intervein as many of you are not experts.I feel this would have not had to come to you if ND game and fish would be willing to work with the people. I feel we've tried to have our voices heard but we can not compete with special interest groups that ND game and fish continually listens to with an open ear. Many of us are just your average North Dakotan who wants to see our deer herd thrive so that we can continue give opportunities and pass down our hunting traditions and heritage to the next generation. Even if your don't hunt please consider how hunting season positively impacts the small town economies.As we see our deer herds devastated by EHD and die of from starvation during hard winters it decrease opporitinuty for ND outdoorsman and women which has a negative impact on our state.I disagree the legislature should not get involved because we elect you to represent us on issues just like this. ND game and fish director is an unelected position and really has no responsibility to answer to the people and the people have no recourse if they have an issue or concern. I feel that is exactly why many of us are asking you approve this measure. I would ask you to support this bill and give the people of ND a voice in this matter. Thank you  
Travis Jensen

I am asking the committee recommend a Do Pass on SB 2137. As a father of young children I like to be able to use feed to be able to bring wildlife into our view weather it be rabbits squirrels birds or deer just something to keep them interested and entertained while we are out there waiting for deer. Keep in mind this is all legal to do but as soon as my kids or myself pick up a weapon to shoot one it becomes illegal and CWD starts to spread.

Thank you

SB 2137

Please support

I am writing to ask you to please support SB 2137. My sons hunt our private land in unit 2J2 near Steele and I am concerned that the North Dakota Game and Fish will be taking away our ability to utilize feed to hunt. The simple fact that we can currently feed but hunting over that feed spreads CWD and is illegal, just doesn't make sense. Please protect our property rights and vote for SB 2137 in its current form.

Cynthia Schlosser

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

My name is Lee Zimmerman and I am writing in support of SB 2137. We are a farm and ranch operation in McHenry County. Over the years we have developed the land for agricultural purposes to feed our livestock and this has definitely played a huge role in the abundance of wildlife in the area. As a landowner and avid sportsman I feel that we should have the right to supplemental feed wildlife whether it be deer, turkeys or small game animals. The restrictions that the North Dakota Game and Fish have enforced on the use of hunting big game over bait in specified units to control the spread of CWD is unjustified and counterproductive. As an outdoorsman I watch these animals congregate in alfalfa fields, small grains and harvested row crops. Hunting is an option as baiting should be, the choice to do so or not has adversely affected hunters who are disadvantaged whether this may be a youth, elderly, nonland owner or handicapped sportsman. Bait or no bait, deer are as social as humans, they travel the same corridors to and from feeding and bedding areas, they socialize whether it's a 10 acre food plot or 200 acre alfalfa field these animals are always generally within arms reach of each other.

We live 4 miles from a unit where baiting is not restricted, in the wintertime our farm will more than double the normal number of deer, turkeys and small game animals. These animals travel 10-20 miles to a winter range. We have large amounts of corn silage, grain corn, screenings and alfalfa hay that is all in our feed yards. As a landowner I'm not complaining nor am I asking for someone to feed the wildlife for us, for years we have fed the wildlife away from our feed yards October through April to control the damage that occurs on our expensive commodities. We leave acres of standing crop not just as food plots for hunting but because we care for the wildlife also. This has helped keep the animals at large away from our feed areas and cattle pens along with predators that harm our livestock. We have learned that if we can spread the feed out and use multiple locations to feed, this keeps the animals less concentrated and more spread out.

In closing, we will not prevent the spread of disease whether there is baiting or no baiting. Agriculture, food plots, cropland, watering holes are all a necessity to keep our wildlife alive and thriving in the state of North Dakota. As landowners and sportsmen, we care about conservation and our rights. As a parent and avid hunter, I care about the next generation and our youth. Please support SB 2137.

Sincerely,

Lee Zimmerman

6144 Sandhills Rd

Towner, ND 58788

leez123@gmail.com

There is no law against feeding wildlife. It seems ridiculous that you couldn't hunt over it. Pass this bill to stop game and fish overreach. They miss manage our resources at every opportunity.

My name is Mason Zimmerman and I am in support of SB2137. And I am a youth hunter that loves to have the chance to go hunting. And as a hunter who has had quite a bit of experience, I believe that baiting should be legal throughout the whole state. Because even if we are not feeding the deer they are still animals that congregate. There will be some nights when I will be driving by our silage piles and see at least a hundred deer all huddled up on it, which is really no different than if the deer are all eating on a bait pile. Bait piles actually will spread deer out more too. So that is why I think that we should be able to bait deer throughout the whole state.

January 10, 2025

TO: Senate Agriculture and Veteran Affairs  
RE: SB 2137

## IN SUPPORT

The current CWD regulations do not make sense.

The NDGF does not follow their own regulations and “science”.

Surveillance units have been manipulated for data and public pleasing actions.

CWD is based on the “Prion Hypothesis”.

Herds are not being decimated and after 57 years, we would see the impact.

No one has pictures of a “prion”. No one. Studies with pictures of fibrils are not “prion”.

22 years of testing 50,000 deer and ONE confirmed with CWD.

## WHAT ARE WE DOING NORTH DAKOTA?

**This is what is being done:**

### **Human Dimensions**

Being used on the public and Legislators at the tune of \$265,023 of federal grant money that was spent on:

*Social media, email marketing, display of ads, search engine marketing, content marketing (video, webcast, podcast), print advertising (magazines, billboards), television, radio, mail, public engagement meetings, vendor events, NDSU Bison in game feature ads. (Provided at NDGF Legislative meeting 1/10/25)*

All under the guise of “public outreach and education”.

### **Testing**

The majority of the deer tested are healthy harvested deer. Way less than 1% are “positive” over 22 years of testing 50,000 deer.

The tests use a technique called ELISA (Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay) that are designed like the PCR tests that were used with COVID. They are designed to pick up antigens and debris that attach to them such as bacteria, virus, and fungi.

They test the lymph nodes of the deer. Lymph nodes rid the body of wastes.

They do NOT test for prion.

They do NOT test for a neurodegenerative disease.

These tests are dictating every decision about CWD.

The ONLY way to confirm a disease like CWD, is to necropsy (biopsy) the brain to see the degrading.

## **Restricting**

In 2005, the NDGF began a campaign to ban the feeding of deer. 2007 and 2009 brought Legislative bills to stop the feeding of wildlife and the public defeated this action.

The NDGF has no authority over the feeding of wildlife.

Because the NDGF does have the authority over method of take, they have a regulation that states if you are in a unit that they have deemed infected with CWD, or are within 25 miles of that unit, you cannot HUNT over supplemental feed.

The entire state can place feed anywhere, anytime and any amount. It is when you are in a restricted unit, you cannot pull the trigger.

It has become a HUNTING RESTRICTION in the deemed CWD units.

There are no irrefutable documents that have shown natural transmission in a controlled environment, that CWD is contagious. The studies available all use massive inoculations (shoving brain matter or saliva) or transfusions, and this is not sound science.

If CWD is contagious, after 57 years, there would not be a deer on the landscape, anywhere.

## **Culling**

The NDGF believes that killing healthy deer will stop the “spread” of CWD.

Williston Massacre:

The NDGF was notified about a dead deer in Williston in 2019. It was tested and Deemed “positive”. Along with the USFW, the NDGF slaughtered 50+ deer, at night, over bait. It has been described as a “blood bath” by locals. The murdered deer were tested and all were negative. The meat was disposed of.

Other states that rely on this savage act, have proven this tool does not work.

Hunting tags are allocated to “stop the spread” in units that CWD is prevalent. In other words, sportsmen are culling the deer for CWD instead of the NDGF.

**So again, what is being done?**

**Human Dimensions**

**Testing**

**Restricting**

**Culling**

**Nothing is being done FOR the deer of North Dakota.**

In fact, the NDGF is discouraging the feeding of the deer at the times that they need it the most (harsh winters and with fetus).

Since 2007, \$919,612 of North Dakotans license and fees has been used on CWD “management”. Not one cent FOR the deer.

The fact that the NDGF has plunged efforts into HUMAN DIMENSIONS is quite disturbing when CWD is a disease about deer.

How is testing, restricting, and culling based on a hypothesis, a management tool that can be trusted? How can hyprocrisy be trusted? It seems that “science” and “expertise” have lost their way.

Because of the above points, any many not mentioned, I am in full SUPPORT of SB 2137.

Respectfully,

Pat Backer

To whom this concerns,

I am taking a few minutes to write up a testimony in support of SB 2137.

This bait ban has yet to directly affect me as it's not in my unit but I can see the writing on the wall. I know that's just a matter of time and a personal agenda for some of the employees to see baiting gone will affect my kids and my bowhunting.

I will make this short and sweet....If you take away baiting in my opinion you take away alot of opportunities for the average blue collar guy in ND. We have seen how hunting is slowly shifting to a rich man's sport. People with lots of land will probably still have plenty of opportunities and possibly even more with a statewide bait ban. People who don't own land will struggle to kill whitetails in ND. Not to mention this will eliminate a lot of disabled people from the bow hunting sport entirely. I have a cousin that is limited to a wheelchair and a few years ago when his unit was banned from baiting he sold his archery equipment. He is on disability and doesn't have a rich dad or farm land to hunt. He was extremely happy to take a doe or first buck that would come in yearly until he was told he would have to "sit on a trail or pattern deer" because baiting was no longer a tool available to him. I would like to see anyone try who says people with disabilities should trudge around in a wheelchair in 6" of snow because baiting is no longer an option to allow them to hunt. I also work hand in hand with Prairie Grit on some outdoor activities, the banning of baiting will eliminate these kids opportunities. Period!!

A neighbor who is a rancher, located south of Minot, has reached out in prior years for assistance in winter for hay... Why??? Because often he has 300-500 deer nightly in his haystacks. We are supposed to follow the Game and Fish's recommendation to ban baiting because they believe ten pounds of corn and 3-4 deer will spread CWD but a person with a bird feeder or a Haystack in the winter won't? Herding happens every winter, this isn't a new phenomenon.

Why eliminate or limit our rights because someone has a "ethics" issue.... I wish we would release all Northern Pike over 40 inches but does that mean the rest of the state should??

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and I urge you to vote yes on SB 2137.

Respectfully submitted,

Kellen Latendresse

Minot, ND

Megan Langley  
280 102nd St NW  
Souris, ND 58783  
(701) 303-0840

My name is Megan Langley, and I am a lifelong resident of North Dakota, a passionate hunter, and someone who deeply values the traditions and economic contributions of hunting in our state.

Over the years, I have witnessed firsthand how hunting enriches our communities, both culturally and economically. From my own experience as an archery hunter, I understand the significant investments of time and money that hunters contribute. For example, my preparation for a single season involved thousands of dollars in equipment, fuel, food, and supplies—expenditures that not only support local businesses but also bolster the state's rural economy. Hunting is more than recreation; it is a driver of economic activity, particularly in our smaller communities.

SB 2137 recognizes the importance of allowing responsible use of supplemental feed for hunting on private property. Baiting is a tool that levels the playing field for hunters, particularly those without access to large tracts of land or extensive resources. It enhances hunting success rates and ensures that participation remains accessible for newcomers and seasoned hunters alike. Restricting baiting, as has been done in many units, has led to a measurable decline in direct economic spending by hunters, as documented in the North Dakota Game & Fish Department's reports.

Supporting SB 2137 is not only about ensuring fair access for hunters but also about sustaining and growing the economic impact hunting has in North Dakota. Allowing baiting on private land aligns with our values of respecting private property rights while maintaining the viability of an important industry. Furthermore, it complements the state's efforts to attract and retain residents by showcasing North Dakota as a place where outdoor traditions thrive.

I urge this committee to support SB 2137 to preserve the accessibility, success, and economic contributions of hunting in our state. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Cody Hilliard  
280 102nd St NW  
Souris, ND 58783  
(701) 460-7295

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2137. My name is Cody Hilliard, and I am a lifelong North Dakotan and dedicated hunter. I support this bill because it upholds private property rights while addressing the unintended negative consequences of banning hunting over supplemental feed.

As landowners and hunters, we understand the importance of managing our wildlife and habitat responsibly. Allowing hunting over supplemental feed ensures that more nutrition is made available to deer, benefiting their health and survival, particularly during North Dakota's harsh winters. When baiting is prohibited, it reduces the incentive for hunters and landowners to provide supplemental feed, ultimately limiting the amount of food available for all deer and putting additional strain on deer populations.

Banning hunting over supplemental feed creates unintended consequences that go beyond hunting itself. Deer that lack access to adequate nutrition are more susceptible to disease, predation, and winter mortality. Supplemental feeding not only benefits the individual deer that are hunted but also contributes to the overall health of local herds by introducing additional food resources into the habitat. This practice supports healthier, more resilient deer populations, which aligns with the long-term goals of wildlife conservation.

SB 2137 also respects the rights of private property owners to manage their land and wildlife as they see fit. Decisions about the use of supplemental feed on private property should remain with the landowners and hunters who are actively involved in managing these resources.

Furthermore, surrounding states are actively feeding their deer herds during harsh winters to ensure their survival, and they have thriving herd populations.

I urge this committee to support SB 2137 to protect private property rights, ensure the health of our deer herds, and sustain the practices that make North Dakota a leader in responsible wildlife management. Thank you for your time and consideration.

As a lifelong hunter and farmer I support this bill ( SB 2137) and ask for a Do Pass recommendation.

I am a lifelong hunter and outdoorsman. I spend a lot of time in the field taking others hunting, working on habitat projects and planting food plots. The last 5 years I have been one of the coordinators for hunts with Prairie Grit Adaptive Sports in Minot. We work to provide hunting opportunities for people with disabilities. I am writing you because the current NDG&F rules on baiting have adversely affected our program. I have always supported the NDG&F as much as possible but their logic and rules on baiting do not seem logical to me and do not seem to be based in science.

The NDG&F position is that the rules on baiting are designed to reduce the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). The theory is that baiting brings deer into close proximity to one another which will expedite the spread of CWD. I do not believe that this theory is supported by science and logic under the current baiting restrictions.

Does banning baiting for deer hunting by individuals, on private land, increase the amount of close contact in whitetail deer:

- The law specifically bans baiting on private property for the purpose of hunting big game. It is still legal to:
  - o Put out feed for hunting turkeys. Deer and turkeys eat many of the same things so deer are eating this feed.
  - o Put out feed for the purpose of photography or watching wildlife, including big game.
  - o Put out feed just for the purpose of feeding wildlife.
  
- Deer in North Dakota naturally group up in the winter so our deer herd will come into close proximity regardless of baiting.
  - o I fed deer at my house before it was banned in my unit. I estimate that 20-30 deer used the feeder at my house for 3-4 months during the fall archery season. There is a feedlot 1.2 miles from my house. In the winter months there will be 100-200 deer feeding and bedding in the silage and haystacks. The 20-30 deer that may have come into close proximity at my house are part of a much larger herd that will spend 2-3 months in close proximity at this feedlot. This seems to make the effect of my feeder at promoting the spread of CWD mostly insignificant.
  - o I can't feed deer at my house for the purpose of hunting big game because it will spread disease, but my neighbor, 1/4 mile away, can feed deer and other wildlife for viewing. Once again this seems to make the effect of my feeder at promoting the spread of CWD mostly insignificant.
  - o Deer are naturally social animals, particularly during the fall breeding season. They mark their territory by making scrapes on the ground and using a "licking branch" above the scrape. A licking branch is a low hanging limb that deer rub their faces on to leave their scent. On one evening this fall I sat in a blind overlooking a food plot that had a scrape and licking branch. Over a time span of approximately 2 hours, I watched 8 deer feed through the plot, 3 young bucks, 1 doe with 1 fawn and 1 doe with 2 fawns. Of these 8 deer 6 used the licking branch. The 2 that didn't use the licking branch were fawns that were later groomed by their mothers who had. The potential of disease spread would be approximately 100%. These 8 deer are most likely spending the winter at the feed lot.

- NDG&F permits what is called intercept or preemptive feeding. This is done in cases where livestock feed supplies, silage and hay, are being damaged by wildlife. In these cases, feed is placed away from the farmyard, usually on travel routes that wildlife use to get to the farmyard. This is done to reduce the amount of wildlife damage to livestock feed supplies. At Advisory Meetings the NDG&F was asked if this practice would be stopped to reduce wildlife coming into close proximity of one another, thus increasing the spread of CWD. The response from NDG&F was that the practice would continue because they believe these animals would come into contact with one another anyway. This is the same argument that we have stated to them repeatedly. Small amounts of feed for hunting is not going to create more contact for wildlife because they are most likely going to come into contact anyway.

The rules that NDG&F have implemented to ban baiting in certain units do not affect everyone fairly/equally:

- In those areas where a banned unit borders a non-banned unit situations are created where one hunter can bait and another can not. If your neighbor across the road is permitted to put out feed but you are not, then you are at a major disadvantage.
  
- There are areas where there is a high percentage of success when hunting without bait. Those properties that have wooded areas, river or creek bottoms and coulees with good cover are some great areas to hunt. Those areas are not plentiful in North Dakota and are highly sought-after hunting locations. Getting permission to hunt those locations is difficult. Those hunters that can't get permission to hunt on prime property are left to trying to hunt on open cropland,

pastures, CRP and sloughs. Without bait the probability of success in these areas is small.

- Planting food plots is permitted and a great way to bring more wildlife into your hunting area. This is not a practice that is available to most hunters. Planting food plots requires owning property or having access to property that the landowner will allow the planting of food plots. It also requires owning or borrowing the equipment needed to prepare, plant and take care of the crop. Successful food plots also require a commitment of time and money that makes it unrealistic for most hunters.

- The restrictions on baiting have caused more hunters to use public hunting areas like refuges, national grasslands and other wildlife management areas. This has caused increased hunting pressure in these areas for wildlife. It has also caused more issues between hunters in the field.

- While banning baiting can affect all hunters it disproportionality affects those that are disabled, older hunters and younger hunters.

- o Hunting for disabled hunters presents physical challenges. Hunting blinds usually have to be established in advance to make sure that conditions will allow access. In most cases getting to the areas with heavy cover that are preferred for hunting is not an option. Disabled hunters usually do not get to choose the best location for their hunt. They must choose the best location that can be made accessible. Chances for success at these locations can be very limited without the use of bait. "We can't go to the deer. We have to get them to come to us."

- o Hunters that are confined to a wheelchair are less mobile in the blind as well. Moving a wheelchair from one shooting window to another without spooking deer is a challenge. For this reason, most disabled setups are designed with one primary shooting window. If the deer don't come within range of that window then success is unlikely.

- o Mobility can also be an issue for older hunters. As we age the ability to hike long distances or over rough terrain decreases. For those hunters an established hunting blind with feed placed nearby may be the only option for a successful hunt.

- o Mobility can also be an issue for those that are trying to get kids involved in hunting. Small children would struggle with hiking long distances or over rough terrain.

- o For those trying to get kids involved in hunting the key is keeping their interest. Most kids are going to lose interest quickly if they are not seeing wildlife. Placing feed nearby increases the odds of seeing deer and other game. It creates a great learning situation when wildlife can be observed and discussed.

Thank you for taking time to read this. I would welcome the opportunity to visit with you personally if you have questions about any of the issues that I have addressed. Please vote "Yes" on SB 2137.

D.J. Randolph

701-720-2134

4562 Valley Road

Velva, ND 58790

snoop@srt.com

My name is Dean Torfin as a life long ND resident and landowner/hunter, trapper, fishermen and outdoorsman i support SB 2137. As a landowner and hunter I feel I should be able to feed the deer and hunt over it if I want instead of not being able to feed the deer and watch over half of the deer die because of starvation on my land. Deer naturally herd up and congregate weather it be at feed piles or hay and feed yards. ND has lost way more deer to starvation during harsh winters and EHD during dry summers yet no attention is focused on that instead NDGF has spent over 900,000 dollars of license fees on testing and trying to convince ND residents Cwd is fatal which it is not in most cases. ND has been testing deer for over 20 years and only one deer has actually been found dead that had a detection of CWD all the rest of the deer that had a detection were killed by hunters. (Less then 1 percent of deer tested have been detected of CWD). NDGF has put 1.5 million dollars into trying to get us to think this is a fatal disease all the while only 1 deer has been found dead from it. And I emphasize 1.5 million dollars over 1 deer lets use common sense and pass SB2137

Thank you

Dean Torfin

## **Please support SB2137:**

EHD has killed the whitetail herd by us already and the NDG&F spends very little time or money talking about that and almost all their energy focused on CWD.

It doesn't make sense that we can feed all we want but the minute we pick up a weapon to hunt it's spreading CWD and illegal.

**Please support SB2137:**

This is a private land issue and we already have the ability to feed, why not hunt?

NDGF is not focused on the correct thing like habitat and is focusing all their time and energy on something like CWD.

### Supplemental Feed for hunting

As legislators for the state of North Dakota you oversee managing the trusts of our state. Wildlife in North Dakota belongs to the state in trust. You are entrusted with the responsibility to protect this resource for the people of North Dakota today and 75 years into the future. We have an agency in place, the North Dakota Game and Fish, whose sole purpose is to protect and manage our wildlife. Do I think they have made all the right decisions, probably not, but I think they do their research and make the decision with the best intentions of our wildlife.

People in support of this bill will argue that they can bait on their land, but what they are baiting is a state resource, not a privately owned resource. They also make claims as hunting over bait is the only way youth hunters or handicap hunters can hunt, people have hunted for years without the use of bait. Hunters can still hunt!

We need to let the agency who has been put in place to protect our state wildlife do their job. Who are you going to trust with the future of our wildlife in North Dakota, a group of hunters who want to hunt deer over bait and bypass a state agency for personal gain or a state agency who has nothing to gain but is only looking to protect wildlife for our hunters now and for many years to come.

Please oppose SB2137 and protect wildlife in North Dakota

<html><head></head><body style="overflow-wrap: break-word; -webkit-nspace-mode: space; line-break: after-white-space;"><div dir="ltr" style="caret-color: rgb(0, 0, 0); color: rgb(0, 0, 0);">Sent from my Hello, I am writing today to show my support of SB 2137. As a landowner, rancher, and a hunter I believe that supplemental feeding of wildlife is necessary and beneficial to their survival. When we get into winter and the weather gets tough the wildlife go looking for food sources that are easy accessible. Knowing that the wildlife will find feed wherever they can I feel we should be able to feed them where ever we want as a landowner to help keep them from our hay/feed yards, feedlots, and grain bins. This isnt just about hunting this is about keeping them alive when tough weather conditions are amongst us.&nbsp;</div><div id="AppleMailSignature" dir="ltr" style="caret-color: rgb(0, 0, 0); color: rgb(0, 0, 0);">I encourage you to recommend due pass please. Thank You</div></body></html>

1/16/25

SB-2137

Here in ND I can legally feed animals 365 days a year on private land, but I cannot hunt over feed. You can walk into Wal-Mart and tons of other stores; in the hunting aisle you can buy corn, salt licks, and game feeders ALL with pictures of deer on it. BUT again the Game and Fish make it illegal to hunt over bait or other variety of other things like salt licks. It makes ZERO sense.

Please vote yes on SB-2137

Jay Hendrickson

I

I support this bill

Chairman Luick, Senate Ag Committee members

My name is Chris Jorde and I will be testifying in favor of SB 2137. I am a Farmer/Rancher, Sportsman, & Landowner. SB 2137 to me allows landowners and sportsman the ability to hunt over supplemental feed that is legal to be done year round on property that is privately owned. In a state that is more than 90 percent privately owned; it is obvious that the private landowners of North Dakota are a very large reason that the states deer herd even exists. I have yet to meet a steward of the land that does not want to see a reasonable balance of wildlife mixed in with their own operations no matter what type of land, farming and ranching practices, or crops raised. The states deer herd eats and survives on privately owned acres every day of the year and as most people know at certain times of the year food is abundantly available and others not. I own and operate my operation on prime wildlife habitat that is home to many different types of game and I offer feed to this wildlife year round. I have been practicing this since 2005 as a supplement to a large wintering herd of deer in their own natural habitat where the amount of food does not exist when they “yard up” to help them survive the harsh North Dakota winters that we often endure. It doesn’t make sense that we have the ability to feed wildlife for numerous reasons as landowners and sportsman across the state and are not able to harvest deer that we are not allowed to be hunted in so called “Restricted CWD areas.” As a rancher we know that for animals to survive and maximize genetic potential that they need to be supplemented at certain times throughout the year and that a healthy animal is less prone to diseases and stress; wildlife are no different! Feeding wildlife is a benefit to all wildlife across the state and all the sportsman that pursue them! It also helps keep herd numbers in check so that there will be more deer harvested and less of a depredation problem later in the season for farmers/ranchers feedstuffs.

I am not a biologist and don’t hold a wildlife degree, but I do hold a Farm/Ranch management degree that I utilize in everyday common sense situations. Diseases in animals and humans have and always will be here forever. What I don’t understand is why NDG&F thinks that CWD is so bad that they can’t even follow their own “science” and regulations to enforce their own policies. Having numerous units restricted for hunting over feed and then not enforcing it looks very bad for so called wildlife “experts” who think the spread of CWD is out of control; it is not!

The private landowners and sportsman of North Dakota deserve the ability and should not be restricted anywhere in the state to harvest wildlife that already exists because of the food they consume on any other day of the year except hunting season.

Please consider my testimony **IN FAVOR OF SB 2137**

Dear Committee,

My name is Ryan Janson, and I fully support SB2137. I would like to have the opportunity to archery hunt over supplemental feed. This will help with better shot placement and better deer recovery. As a hunter myself I have done research on the CWD narrative and have not seen any evidence to show that it is a true problem. However, EHD and lack of winter herd management is a much bigger problem. Please Vote yes on SB2137.

Sincerely,  
Ryan Janson

January 16, 2025

In opposition of HB 2137

I stand in opposition of HB 2137 which removes the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's ability to effectively manage habitat and wildlife following acceptable science-based management practices.

HB 2137 seeks to remove the department's ability to manage wildlife, primarily big game species. The science which supports not providing a means for big game to congregate in larger than natural conditions, in the case of HB 2137 over a non-natural food source, increases the probable of disease propagation. A higher level of disease propagation will lead to the decline of the species.

I recommend the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee to not support HB 2137.

Greg Gerou,

Dear members of the senate ag committee. I ask for a do pass of SB 2137. Last session and this session 70+% wrote in in favor of this bill. Please follow the peoples wishes and vote in favor of this bill. End the departments HUNTING restriction.

Please vote yes on senate bill 2137.

01/16/2025

Written testimony in support of SB 2137

Dear Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

I am writing to you today to show my support for SB 2137 which would not allow the department to adopt a rule or implement policy that would prohibit or restrict the use of supplemental feed on private property for hunting a big game animal.

I was born and raised in ND and now that I live on the other side of a river, I still call my self a North Dakotan.

In my lifetime I have seen the continuing decline of habitat for the deer population. Shelter belts that used to decorate our plans are no longer there. The CRP acres seem to be disappearing, and more and more land looks black in the fall. Two years ago, we had an unprecedented winter that destroyed not only the deer population but also has taken away the sport too many. I have herd many that say they have given up on the sport of hunting as it takes just too long to get a license now.

When we see winters like we did 2 years ago is there anything wrong with sportsman feeding deer that would otherwise die to starvation. I will guarantee that more deer were lost in ND due to the amount of snow than did from CWD.

I know I personally did all I could to feed the deer where I saw them that winter. This included putting out hay bales and feeding corn. I feel good that I know some of the deer that I supported made it through that tough winter.

If we take away feeding you will end efforts from sportsmen like my self and others that doo all they can to support the population not only for hunting my self but for the future of the sport for my sons and hopefully there kids as well.

I urge you to support for SB 2137 for future generations of sportsmen and women.

David Thingvold

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Thingvold', with a stylized flourish at the end.

I am writing this to ask that you pass SB 2137.

Thank you

I support HB2137. I believe it is very low risk for CWD transmission.

I also believe it will have a low impact on the big game populations.

I would ask you to support this bill Thank you

Emery Duben

16 January 2025

I strongly oppose Senate Bill No. 2137. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department exists to protect and manage common resources, such as public lands and big game animals, ensuring they are available for the benefit of all North Dakotans. Responsible wildlife management, particularly for species like white-tailed deer, requires science-based policies that include harvest limits and restrictions on activities that could negatively impact population health.

One of the key concerns in managing white-tailed deer populations is the spread of disease, particularly Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). CWD is a fatal, highly transmissible neurological disease that affects deer and other cervids, causing severe population declines over time. Scientific research has consistently shown that baiting—placing food to attract and concentrate deer in one area—significantly increases the likelihood of disease transmission. By artificially congregating deer, baiting creates an environment where infected individuals are more likely to spread CWD to healthy deer through saliva, urine, and feces.

SB 2137 would prohibit the North Dakota Game and Fish Department from banning baiting, stripping wildlife professionals of their ability to implement necessary disease-prevention measures. This bill directly contradicts established science and undermines the department's ability to fulfill its mission of conservation and responsible management.

Supporting SB 2137 prioritizes the short-term interests of a select few over the long-term health of North Dakota's white-tailed deer populations and the many hunters, conservationists, and outdoor enthusiasts who depend on a sustainable and healthy ecosystem. Wildlife management decisions should be based on research and expert recommendations, not on political interference or pressure from anti-science lobbying efforts. I urge lawmakers to reject this bill and support policies that promote the long-term well-being of North Dakota's wildlife and natural resources.

Dr. Jennifer Sweatman  
Associate Professor in Sustainability Science  
Concordia College

## Letter Regarding SB 2137

I am truly frustrated with the NDGF Department's political agenda regarding the baiting of deer. According to them not baiting will slow the spread of CWD. Wow. Deer are going to "group up" during the winter months. They always have and always will. I wonder if it was coincidence or intentional that the "baiting ban" happened about the same time that our state's deer population was hit hard with EHD/Blue Tongue. I believe some people think they are one and the same. They are not. There is no proof that supplemental feed increases the chance of CWD and, obviously, having a deer blind next to supplemental feed is not a CWD issue.

I also take offense that the NDGF thinks they are so important that they can tell me what to do on my land. I own land in Mountrail and McKenzie counties. North Dakota landowners and sportsmen are the caretakers of the land and wildlife. Not the NDGF.

Please consider landowner rights, the unnecessary culling of deer trying to find a positive CWD case, and the NDGF selling way too many doe tags after EHD recently annihilated our deer herd and vote in support of SB 2137.

Cindy Williamson

Senate Agriculture Committee

I support passage of SB2137

Senate Agriculture Committee

I support passage of SB2137

Senate Agriculture Committee

I support passage of SB2137

Re: SB 2137 The use of supplemental feed for hunting.

My name is Abby Jorde and I am a resident of rural Towner, ND. My father, Christ Jorde, is an entrepreneur (farmer, rancher, and outfitter) and the head of operations for Heart J Ranch & Hay and Heart J Outfitters. I've taken hunter safety and I currently trapshoot. Hunting and firearms have always been a part of my life. Many memories made while hunting are ones I will cherish forever. That being said, the use of supplemental feed for hunting has many benefits. I am in favor of SB 2137 because not only is hunting an important and meaningful activity, it provides many more opportunities for hunters. Deer are wild animals, therefore they do not know boundaries. Deer or any animals do not know the difference between units, counties, or states. Deer are animals that survive by instinct and experience. Deer that are used to there being food in an area (food plot) will associate that area as a part of their mind map of survival. Deer populations much like any animal populations need to be protected. Hunters are the primary tool for managing healthy wildlife populations in North Dakota.

I myself as a minor have experienced youth tag hunting. Having a youth tag year after year while still in that age range, you have your own season and opportunity to hunt that is almost guaranteed because you have a tag. However, when our young hunters get older, they move from the youth tags to the general lottery. Once in the age range of the general lottery, your chance to harvest a deer rests solely on the mere chance that you find an area that a deer of your liking will be passing through so you may harvest it. Without baiting, it may be incredibly hard to establish where deer will be passing through.

There are a lot of positives to allowing baiting that affect several different aspects of hunting. Deer "herd up" naturally as a survival instinct. CWD does not spread strictly over a bait pile, and allowing everyone to place bait piles would actually hypothetically spread out deer around the state, rather than them crowding in places where only part of the state is allowed to bait.

Please consider and vote in favor of passing SB 2137. Thank you.  
Abby Jorde. Towner, ND.

Schale Welstad. Upham, ND.

Why baiting should be allowed.

- Baiting should be allowed to be deer gathering no matter what. I don't believe baiting is the main cause of CWD.
- The hunting sport is dying because of the fact that the youth are not able to harvest a deer that you can't bait. If the sport keeps dying the deer will eventually overpopulate and then we will have bigger problems on our hands.
- If the game and fish would lift the baiting law there would be more deer shot. Therefore we could try and eliminate the CWD being that more will be harvested. It also gives people a better chance to harvest a deer which then will grow the sport.

CWD has been here since the 60s if its so deadly there shouldnt be a deer left on the landscape, but thats not the case is it. This whole narrative by the NDGF and the AFWA is nothing more than going after property owner rights and money money money!

20 years and only ONE CONFIRMED case ONE!!!!

North Dakota residents are allowed to supplemental feed year round under rule of law. But shooting an animal over that same food source is going to create CWD? This is the dumbest thing ever!

These people to this day have yet to show a picture of a prion under a microscopic image and thats because it doesnt exist, its a hypothesis nothing more. And now with all the federal money, our money! being spent on human demensions (trying to convince everyone its so deadly) just goes to show you its about property rights and money not a disease. I could go on and on but I encourage you to do the right thing and give us our property rights that the NDGF have taken from us and put a stop to this wasteful spending of federal dollars, our money.

Until they actually prove the science behind CWD their is no science, hypothesis is not science.

01/16/2025

Written Testimony in support of SB 2137

Honorable Members of the Committee

I am writing today in support of SB 2137. I have been an avid outdoorsman my whole life and have two young kids that I am teaching as well. I have had the opportunity to hunt over bait and that is what kept my interest early in life. I think if this opportunity comes to an end our new generations of hunters are going to lose interest.

North Dakota's deer population can fluctuate significantly based on the winters we face with extreme weather and summers we face in times of drought. Hunting over bait is a great way to manage deer populations in high density areas. Baiting also allows hunters to take a more ethical shot by bringing deer into closer ranges and decreasing the risk of wounding an animal and ensures a humane harvest.

Hunting over bait gives opportunities to individuals who may not be able to physically harvest deer from a mobility perspective or the ability to track deer, this ensures that they can participate in the sport they love to do.

Hunting has a major economic roll in the state of North Dakota and by taking baiting opportunities away from residents and non-residents will diminish the interest in hunting in our state and we will have a much bigger problem with over population and potential economic impact on small towns that rely on the hunting seasons that bring revenue into there communities.

In closing, hunting over bait is an ethical and effective way to control the deer population in our great state.

I urge you to support SB 2137 in the protection and growth of a great sport.

Ryan Carter

Testimony of John Risch resident of Bismarck  
Before the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee  
In Opposition to SB 2137 1-17-2025

Mr. Chairman members of the committee my name is John Risch I'm a lifetime citizen of North Dakota. I'm retired from the railroad industry. My wife and I own a farm and ranch 10 miles southwest of Mandan. An incredibly beautiful place that has the Heart River flowing through it. A place where I and others hunt deer every year.

I strongly believe in the principle of "fair chase". I not only don't allow baiting on our place I also don't allow cameras, because they undermine the principle of "fair chase".

Baiting deer is certainly not "fair chase". Deer become accustomed to the bait and show up every day to eat it. All the hunter has to do is set up and wait. Shooting a deer over bait is not hunting, it's simply killing.

We are very fortunate to live in North Dakota where our hunting heritage is strong and for the most part respected by the public. Shooting deer over bait will undermine that respect.

We are also very fortunate to have an incredible Game and Fish Department. Headed by Director Jeb Williams and a team of professional wildlife biologists. They are the experts. If they say baiting helps spread disease and it threatens our deer population I believe them. They should not be prohibited from doing what they think is right to protect our precious wildlife.

I urge the committee to recommend a "Do Not Pass" on Senate bill 2137 and vote against the bill when it comes to the floor.

I am writing to ask you reccomend a do pass on SB2137.

Thursday, January 16, 2025

Craig Wendt  
13730 38<sup>th</sup> St SE  
Buffalo, ND 58011  
**701-238-5039**  
[craigawendt@hotmail.com](mailto:craigawendt@hotmail.com)

To Whom It May Concern:

**RE: Game and Fish Department's Regulations on Feeding Wildlife During Hunting Season**

I am a landowner in Western Cass County. My ranch consists of approximately 2,000 acres along the Maple River.

I have spent countless time and money making the land better for both agriculture practices and deer management.

I have been installing food plots and supplemental feeding deer for the past twenty (20) years. The deer will naturally herd up on my property in the wintertime, even prior to my ownership, due to the cover that is along the river.

On an average year, I will have approximately 150 – 250 deer congregate and herd up on my property.

I feel the deer will do what deer naturally do; they will herd up in the wintertime and stay in close contact with others and even feed in the same area without supplemental feed.

The reason the deer herd up on my property is for the habitat, as well as, food and survival against predators. There is safety in numbers.

If a deer comes down with CWD, there is nothing we can do to prevent deer to be in contact with each other. This is what will naturally happen with mother nature.

My questions are... if baiting is legal during the entire year, except when hunting over the feed, what are you really accomplishing? What underlining goals are you trying to accomplish?

Is this an ethical thing that you are trying to achieve? If this is the case, we have rifles that can shoot out to 1,000 yards. How ethical is that?

The winter of 2022 – 2023 was extremely devastating for the deer population. I estimated I have lost 50% of the herd that winter on my property. If it wasn't for supplemental feed, the devastation could have been worse.

I feel the ND Game and Fish Department is lacking in good leadership. We should be working with the landowners for better habitat and more access for the average hunter.

By telling us we cannot hunt deer on our own land over supplemental feed during the hunting season, I feel is unacceptable. You are furthering the stress on the landowner and the sportsmen.

In closing, regarding SB2137, I hope you take the information I have provided into consideration.

Thank you so much for your time

A concerned Conservationist and Sportsman,

Craig A. Wendt  
701-238-5039

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 2137, commonly referred to as the "Baiting Bill." While this legislation may aim to enhance hunting opportunities, it poses a significant threat to our wildlife by undermining efforts to control Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).

CWD, a fatal and highly contagious disease affecting deer, elk, and other cervids, spreads primarily through direct contact and environmental contamination. Baiting and feeding practices exacerbate this problem by artificially concentrating wildlife, facilitating the transmission of CWD through saliva, feces, urine, and contaminated soil. Scientific research and data consistently show that limiting baiting and feeding is essential for slowing the disease's spread.

SB 2137 threatens years of progress in CWD research and management by allowing practices that directly contradict evidence-based strategies. Wildlife agencies and researchers have worked tirelessly to study and mitigate this disease, and this bill undermines their efforts by creating conditions that accelerate its transmission. The long-term impacts of CWD include not only devastating declines in wildlife populations but also significant economic losses for communities that rely on healthy ecosystems and sustainable hunting industries.

By passing SB 2137, we risk compromising the health of our wildlife, diminishing hunting opportunities in the future, and increasing the financial burden on agencies and taxpayers tasked with managing this disease. Responsible wildlife management policies are crucial to protecting both our natural resources and the hunting heritage that many of us hold dear.

I urge you to oppose SB 2137 and prioritize science-based strategies to combat the spread of CWD. Protecting our wildlife and preserving the integrity of our ecosystems should remain a top priority for all legislators.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Tim Hoffer

I support this bill

Chairman Luick committee members my name is Kim Thompson and I have worked my entire career in the health care profession as a registered nurse with a very good understanding of infectious diseases and as such question the NDGF experts policies regarding SB 2137 which I support

The NDGF opposes “supplemental feeding”

How are small acreage food plots planted to feed wildlife not “supplemental feeding”???

If “supplemental feeding” does not benefit wildlife including deer and elk, why does the NDGF fund and engage in food plots themselves???

A 1 acre food plot of corn can produce 150 bushels of corn

That 1 acre is good

150 piles of 1 bushel of corn placed on 1 acre of land is bad ...

Hunting over 1 bushel piles of corn in 150 different places dispersed in a 100,000 acre unit is bad

Congregating 200 deer into 150 1 acre food plots in an unit to hunt over is good ....

The NDGF “science” says that the CWD “prion” can live very long periods of time in the environment and be transferable and infectious on things such as a corn cob in a food plot deposited from the saliva of an infected deer ... but the NDGF funds and plants food plots themselves ....

It really shows this is about the ethics of hunting over bait and not about any degree of actual science

I urge you to support SB 2137 with a do pass vote

## **Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs**

### **SB 2137**

Chairman Luick and Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members, I am asking for a DO NOT PASS on SB 2137 relating to supplemental feeding of wildlife for the purposes of hunting.

Sometimes, we have to trust the experts, in this case, the biologists and staff of the ND Game and Fish. I have used “supplemental feeding” in the past and it is definitely an aid to hunters, no doubt. When the unit that I hunt was in the CWD watch zone, those privileges were removed, and we did not do so for a few years. As much as I griped in my own mind, I did what was right based on the best science that we have. It is a small sacrifice to make that may ensure a healthy herd for generations to come.

Thank you for your time, and please vote DO NOT PASS on SB 2137.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Metzger', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jay Metzger  
Argusville, ND

January 16, 2025

Good day to all.

My name is Jaye Sandstrom. I reside at 3060 94 Ave NW New Town, ND 58763.

Thank you for hearing my plea for support of SB 2137. Hats off to authors for the preciseness of the text.

There are people "out there" that know the absolute whys and wherefores of pushing the apparent plan-demic behind Chronic Wasting Disease scare. Since I, and most of the public are not in that committee of thought, we can only surmise what the plot is intended to do. Regardless of the motive, it is disheartening that our own Game and Fish Department heads promote such devious plans and are allowed by our lawmakers to continue the chronic wasting of our taxpayer funds and patience. If there is even such a disease, can we just look for the common sense to cure the disease instead of manipulating the human behavior away from the sport of hunting. If preserving the deer from devastating diseases instead of throwing money at one that has become only a boogeyman in that it must exist, even though it can't be found, and only a theory as to what causes this boogeyman, might I suggest instead, that we get serious with fighting EHD that has been found to be a massive killer of our Whitetail herd in North Dakota just about every year somewhere.

It appears to me, conspiracy theory or not, that the Chronic Wasting disease is a rat hole for taxpayer money to be filled for those that can figure out how to get the inside track to the funding source managers. Laundering comes to mind. Over a million dollars of combined spending alone in North Dakota and multiple millions of dollars nationwide is being spent and it just seems to be allowed as more and more so-called scientists figure out a way to jump on board.

Please support SB2137 so that we might preserve some common sense and begin to retrieve faith in government to conserve all rights. Doing so will hopefully curtail the chronic wasting of taxpayer money and chase the make-believe Chronic Wasting Disease boogeyman back into the book of horror stories.

I am writing you in regards to SB 2137. I am opposed to this bill and offer the following reasons for this opposition. First as a long time hunter in North Dakota in excess of 55 years, I have always respected and relied on the North Dakota Game and Fish (G&F) to manage and protect our fish and wildlife resource. I believe they have the personnel and expertise to effectively manage our fish and wildlife and they have not proved me wrong in 65 years. To hamstring this agency by restricting them in their ability to regulate and control wildlife diseases is unconscionable and grossly misguided.

I will also speak to this proposed legislation as a landowner. I do not believe I own the wildlife on my land, and am a strong proponent of the North American Model of Wildlife Management which states that wildlife is held in trust for the people of the state of North Dakota. From a landowner prospective I am really sick of having bait piles surrounding my land, some within 50 yards of the boundary. I work hard to provide habitat by planting trees and shrubs as well as wildlife friendly crops. All this to see people with piles of bait surrounding my land to attract deer to their land that has been stripped of all its trees and wildlife habitat. This is annoyance but Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is more than an annoyance, it is reality. The G&F only restricts baiting in areas with CWD or adjacent units. North Dakota currently has low prevalence of this disease and the reason for this the the proactive approach G&F has taken to control this disease.

I am asking you to please consider opposing SB 2137 and keep the Game and Fish Department in charge of all aspects of wildlife management. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.

01/16/2025

**Written Testimony in Support of SB 2137**

**Dear Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee Members,**

My name is Nicholas Kavli, and I am a lifelong outdoorsman and a proud father of two children. I primarily hunt on a family farm in the Turtle Mountains. Today, I write to you in strong support of SB 2137.

As someone deeply invested in wildlife health and the future of outdoor activities in North Dakota, I believe the current restrictions on baiting have unintentionally caused more harm than good. These restrictions not only impact the health and behavior of wildlife but also strain the relationship between hunters, landowners, and the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF).

I understand and respect the concerns about Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), but I believe that prohibiting baiting is counterproductive. Let me highlight my reasoning, guided by the best available science and my personal experiences as a hunter and landowner.

The *AFWA Technical Report on Best Management Practices for Prevention, Surveillance, and Management of Chronic Wasting Disease*—a document referenced by NDGF—addresses baiting as a factor in CWD management. Notably, the report concludes the section on baiting with this statement:

"In preventing, managing or controlling CWD, states should consider the socio-economic consequences of prohibitions on baiting and feeding."

This recommendation underscores the importance of balancing wildlife health with social and economic realities. It acknowledges that the "human element"—the involvement and cooperation of hunters and landowners—is critical to effective wildlife management.

On my family farm, the baiting ban has significantly altered our hunting practices. In the past, we used small, regulated bait piles to keep deer on our land after crops were harvested. Without baiting, the deer migrate to areas with illegal bait piles or to those with the resources to maintain food plots. This creates an unintended concentration of deer, which undermines the very goal of reducing disease transmission.

Moreover, the baiting ban has eroded trust and cooperation between hunters and NDGF. Hunters are less likely to participate in essential activities like responding to surveys or submitting harvested deer for testing. NDGF's recent policy, allowing baiting if 10% of tags in a unit are submitted for testing, has only seen one unit meet this requirement—a clear indicator that hunters are disengaged.

By supporting SB 2137, you have the opportunity to restore balance and foster a better relationship between hunters, landowners, and NDGF. This legislation acknowledges the socio-economic impacts of baiting restrictions while addressing wildlife health concerns.

Thank you for considering my perspective and for all you do to ensure North Dakota remains a great place for hunting and outdoor recreation.

Sincerely,  
Nicholas Kavli

January 16th, 2025 I strongly oppose Senate bill #2137 as CWD should not be ignored. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department exists to promote hunting and fishing in North Dakota and using information gleaned from the rapid spread of CWD in other states the department wants a better outcome for North Dakota. SB 2137 directly contradicts the science of CWD spread and limits the department's efforts to control the disease. Baiting may increase deer harvest success short term, but CWD infected units will most definitely see a decrease in herd size and therefore a decrease in hunter success in the long term. Another protein folding disease seen in sheep called scrapie can cause pastures to be infected for over 10 years so prevention of spread to other hunting units is the goal. The misfolded protein that causes CWD is related to Mad Cow Disease but has not been shown to cause human disease at this time but as thousands and millions of people are exposed to the protein, no one can guarantee that that will continue. The North Dakota Game and Fish department wants to limit the spread of CWD. SB 2137 ties the hands of the experts and should be voted down. Rod Gigstad DVM Grand Forks, ND

To the committee-

I, Pete Artz, am in support of SB 2137. To try to stop the outrageous over reach of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. I use to be an avid hunter, but the arrogance of the game and fish department no longer worth the bother.

01/16/2025

Written testimony in support of SB 2137

Mr. Chairman and Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

I encourage all of you to support this bill.

My family has hunted in this state for multiple generations. For many years we have used feed to allow our young hunters to make ethical shots in a controlled environment. This gives them a chance to harvest game with less risk of wounding the animal. Those with physical limitations also have a better chance of providing themselves and their families with a great food source.

Deer herd up in the winter, it has been that way since they have inhabited our state. It will not change, and we cannot stop it. It makes no sense to not allow hunters to use this method to harvest game.

Respectfully,

Shannon Hanson

12101 54<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW

Burlington, ND 58722

01/16/2025

Senate Bill 2137

Hello, I would like to say that I support this bill because it helps youth and elderly who cannot hunt other ways have a better opportunity to harvest a deer. Not being able to bait has caused many bowhunters to not be able to hunt anymore because they do not have a way to hunt otherwise. It is a good tool to make a good and ethical shot on deer. Please vote Yes on Senate Bill 2137. Thank you.

Otto Williamson  
Minot, ND

I am Kent Reiersen of Williston, ND. I am a member of numerous Habitat organizations, and I am active hunter. I am an archery enthusiast and hunt with a rifle and bird hunt. I oppose Senate Bill 2137 of the 69<sup>th</sup> legislative assembly. I believe we should leave wildlife management up to professionals and not use ballot box management. NDGF allows public input and has the best interests of the state's wildlife as part of its mission. People can express opinions and desires to the department to influence decisions and policy. But the ultimate decisions should be science based. While I don't agree with all decisions of NDGF they are in the best position to ultimately make scientifically based management decisions.

Those who presented this bill are not taking the best interests of our publicly owned wildlife into consideration. In the last legislative session baiting was an issue and the result was further restricting the NDGF from doing its job as it relates to CWD management. In the end it allowed baiting restrictions where there was documented CWD. This bill would strip authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish to implement their CWD Management Plan by prohibiting the Game and Fish from banning baiting practices where such restrictions are most needed.

One must ask why would a person interested in the best interests of long term deer management desire such a bill. The obvious answer is: they wouldn't. They only want such a policy so it is easier for them to kill a deer without regard to the long term impact of CWD, an infectious and always fatal disease. Some argue the science is not absolute on the ability of such baiting restrictions to help impede the spread of CWD. But if there is doubt why would we not err on the side of protecting the resource not risk it further.

Please vote no on this unneeded legislation that puts our public resources at risk.

Thank You.

Senate Ag Committee members,

My name is Wyatt Stanley and I've been an avid outdoorsman in North Dakota for the last 20 years. My

first deer ever harvest was with a bow over a bait pile. That bait pile was a tool that I used at a young age to be able to take an ethical shot, at a known yardage I had been practicing at.

I have helped 8 youth fill their tags the last couple years and would like to continue to do so, and if baiting is a tool I can use again, I would like to use our stands to help get youth into archery hunting. I

feel like after helping kids practice shooting, and then being able to place a bait pile at that same yardage, it is a very valuable thing to keep kids entertained and help them take that ethical shot.

Deer are naturally herd animals... between spending time in bachelor groups in the summer, or congregated in the winter, or using the same food plot or scrape as other deer, they have contact with a

number of other deer year around, and the data that has been released by the department does not back that a baiting restriction has helped slow the spread.

For these reason I Support SB 2137.

Thank you,

Wyatt Stanley

SB 2137

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

I am writing in opposition of this bill (SB 2137). I have hunted deer over bait for many years, and find it to be a very effective method. The last few years I haven't been able to due to restrictions. Did I just give up and stop hunting? No, I found other ways to continue to hunt. Did I find my hunting experience less appealing without baiting? No. This bill, in my opinion, is an extremely slippery slope, and it is much bigger than just baiting.

The North Dakota Game and Fish is an agency of wildlife professionals, who are also North Dakotans who live, work, fish and hunt in North Dakota. Their mission is to *"protect, conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitat for sustained public consumptive and nonconsumptive use."* This bill limits their ability to do what *might be*(or might not be) necessary to sustain this public resource.

Now I do believe there is alot of science out there on both sides of the baiting/disease transmission topic. It's a daunting task to comb through it all and make sense of it all. But that is why we hire professionals to do this job. It's not always fun and it's certainly not always easy, but let them make the best decisions based on ALL the information out there. Should sportsmen/women be concerned about CWD? Absolutely. Should they be researching and questioning? Yes, that is what science is all about. I think there is a lot of evidence that shows baiting doesn't have a major effect on CWD transmission...

Any time I have reached out to an NDGF employee about something they have been very good at explaining the reasoning, and I trust them in their professional judgment. Anytime we restrict the professionals who have extensive education and let the armchair biologist make decisions I think we are putting ourselves in a tough position.

The North American Wildlife Model Pillar #6 states:

***"Science is the proper tool for discharge of wildlife policy. In order to manage wildlife as a shared resource fairly, objectively, and knowledgeably, decisions must be based on sound science such as annual waterfowl population surveys and the work of professional wildlife biologists."***

Let the professionals who do this job every day make the decisions they need. This certainly doesn't mean they cannot be questioned, like I said earlier, science is always evolving due to questioning. The legislature should not be playing biologist.

Thank you,

Matt Liebel  
Williston, ND

1/16/2025

SB-2137

As a private landowner and hunter who has seen the benefits of supplemental feed for deer, I strongly encourage the passing of this bill. My private property rights will not be restricted when concerning supplemental feed to help an already struggling deer herd.

I urge the voting of yes on SB-2137.

Cole Thompson

Chairman Luick, Senate Ag Committee members, my name is Wyatt Thompson. I am testifying today in favor of SB2137. I will be talking about some of the question marks I have as a sportsman and landowner of the department and their science on this bill.

3F2 is the hunting unit where CWD was first discovered in North Dakota in 2009. It is made up mostly of Grant and Sioux counties.

After CWD was discovered in the unit in 2009, a hunting restriction was placed over supplemental feed. According to press releases from the Game and Fish, between 2009 and 2022 there have been 90 CWD positive hunter killed deer in North Dakota. 55 of these 90 hunter killed CWD positives have come from 3F2. This is 61% of all positive hunter killed deer that have occurred in North Dakota during this timeframe. Between 2019 and 2022 (I excluded the data from 2023 because in what was released to the press by the department it doesn't say how many positives came from each unit), 10 years after the hunting restriction was put in place, a large spike occurred. During that 4-year time frame from 19-22, 76.4% of all the positives that have occurred in 3F2 were found. Please keep in mind that this 4-year window was 10 years after the hunting restriction was put in place. Let me ask you, did this HUNTING restriction put in place by the department really slow down the spread of CWD in this unit or does this spike after 10 years cast a shadow of doubt that the restrictions did not slow down the spread, given the big spike the from 2019-2022?

After this 4-year uptick, the department then decided to move their key surveillance area to another part of the state. The opposition and “experts” from the department will stand up here and show power points from other states like Wisconsin or Colorado, or from our neighbors to the north in Saskatchewan, but in all reality, they had the perfect data collection point right here in North Dakota, but after this home grown data did NOT fit their agenda (the uptick came 10 years after the hunting restriction was put in place), they abandoned it and shifted their focus to data from elsewhere.

My next reason that I am in support of this bill is I came down to Bismarck in 2023 to testify in favor of HB 1151, and we listened to members of the department tell the house energy and natural resources committee to follow the “science” and listen to the experts. Just a couple short months after the experts were in committees and on the legislature floor saying to trust us and follow the science, they did not ban 2 units that fell within their 25 miles of a positive criteria. Then this previous year in 2024 they decided not to ban 3 more units in the northeast corner of the state, again ignoring their “best available science” that the department themselves puts forth. This is the second time that the department has moved away from their own science and protocols after pleading for people to follow them. Does this make it science and fact, or does it make it opinion. Why is the department able to pick and choose when to follow it, while asking the public to always trust it.

The last point that I would like to make today is on the topic of culling. In an open records request to the ND Game and Fish

Department, the question was asked **what is the Number of tags (percentage) that are allocated in each unit for CWD culling per year for the past 10 years**. The response was as follows.. “We do not allocate tags specifically for "CWD culling." Numerous factors influence license numbers. We rely on aerial surveys to estimate our deer population, although these surveys are dependent on adequate snow cover, therefore, are not always possible every year. Because of this, we also rely on trend and index data collected which is derived from hunter surveys and harvest data. These include hunter observation data (number of deer seen per hour of hunting effort during first weekend of rifle season), harvest density index, and success rates. In addition, we take into account extrinsic factors such as winter weather and disease outbreaks. We also consider social factors such as hunter comments, depredation issues, and social tolerances in regards to too few/too many deer, hunting pressure/competition, etc. We generally error toward a more liberal license allocation where CWD is established, as hunter harvest is a documented way to control prevalence and spread, but that is one of numerous factors taken into account.”

This is the most bureaucratic response possible to say “we use sportsmen for culling in CWD units” without actually saying it. The 2 units with the highest prevalence rates in the state are 3f2 and 3a1. I touched on the numbers from 3f2 earlier, and 3a1 has popped up more recently in the last few years, and also has a hunting restriction in. In the habitat summit from a few weeks ago a lady with the department stood behind a podium with the map I gave you on the screen and said this and I quote.. “if you’re wondering about those 2 units in green, this is where CWD is endemic in our deer herd, and we’re purposefully keeping deer licenses high in those units to try and slow the spread of the disease.” The department uses sportsmen to cull the deer herd, all at the cost of future opportunities of sportsmen.

In 2019 the department culled 52 deer from south of Williston because of 1 deer, the only deer in North Dakota history, that has POSSIBLY died due to CWD. This deer was found dead and then tested positive so they consider this a death due to CWD. This culling was viewed so negatively by the sportsmen of North Dakota that it was the last time that the department did a culling themselves. Not one of those 52 deer came back positive, and the department disposed of the meat in a landfill. Now they use the sportsmen of North Dakota to do their dirty work for them. The department is using the sportsmen to over harvest deer in 3f2 and 3a1, the 2 units on that map in green. Every other unit in the state has seen tag numbers decline, minus those 2 that have increased by 20% in 3a1 and 3F2. 3F2 has such a surplus of tags they have left over, over the counter tags. This is not managing wildlife through those things stated above like aerial surveys and hunter surveys, this is sportsman over harvesting to cull for the department and has removed more future opportunities then CWD has done in 27 years of testing in the state.

According to an article from the ND Game and fishes magazine, testing for CWD started in north Dakota in 1998 with sick and suspected animals. Even with the entire state still open to hunting over supplemental feed, it took 11 years for them to find their first positive. Since then, the units that have had baiting banned the longest in the state are the ones with prevalence rates increasing almost every year. Hunting over supplemental feed in north Dakota does not spread CWD at a rate that is worth being scared of, and the departments Hunting restriction over supplemental feed has shown it has done little to slow down CWD in 3a1 and 3f2.

In an article ran in the Grand Forks Harold just a few days ago by Doug leier, an out reach biologist at the North Dakota Game and Fish department quoted Kevin Kading **“We recognize that many people care deeply about wildlife and it can be difficult to watch nature play out, but feeding operations, good intentions and all, can actually do more harm for wildlife than good.”**

People do care deeply about the wildlife in North Dakota and it can be difficult to watch nature play out whether it be about supplemental feeding or CWD, but good intentions, even by the “experts” can do more harm then good for wildlife, especially when a department doesn’t follow their own “best available science.

I would like you to please consider a DO PASS vote on SB2137.

Thank you and I will stand for any questions.

I support SB2137.

It is my understanding that NDGF can't directly regulate supplement feeding itself on private land, but I strongly oppose their decision to restrict hunting over supplemental feed. This restriction is an illogical solution in regard to keeping deer from congregating.

Rather than imposing restrictions, NDGF should trust that hunters, as stewards of the land, can manage their hunting practices responsibly. We are committed to following ethical hunting standards, using safe supplemental feed practices, and taking steps to reduce any and all risk to the herds. I strongly believe that private property rights should be respected, and landowners should have the autonomy to manage their own land as they see fit.

Steve & Windi Portenga

Legislators of North Dakota,

I am writing this testimony in opposition of SB 2137. No matter which way one feels about how CWD affects or could affect North Dakotas deer herd, allowing game and fish regulations to be put in place via disgruntled public input almost guarantees our states wildlife loses. Weve seen in other states how emotional decisions have thrown wildlife management awry when popular vote overrides professional opinion (predators overpopulated ect.), I believe there is a better more common sense way forward here.

John Torfin  
Mandan, ND

Dear Committee,

My name is Todd Sletvold and I am a landowner/farmer, and sportsman. I have lost faith and trust in the ND game and fish department. I started questioning science when covid became a political game. The numbers game and fish have provided tells me CWD is similar. This is a political money grab through fear mongering. EHD is the true killer of deer yet game and fish does nothing for this in the name of science. Prior to the CWD push I would say we need to leave this to the professionals but I lost my trust in them. As far ethics goes I'm tired of people saying it's unethical to harvest a deer with archery equipment over supplemental feed yet they think it's ethical to drive around and jump out of their truck with a high powered rifle and shoot a deer at 200 yards standing in a grain field which was also put there by man. Game and Fish needs to regain the trust of the majority and end this CWD push.

Please support SB2137

Dear Mr. Chairman & Members of the Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee:

My name is Wade Williamson and I reside in Parshall, ND. I am a retired farmer and have hunted my entire life. I've also spent many thousands of dollars every year in maintenance of wildlife and creation of habitat. I ask you to support Senate Bill 2137.

Some of the reasons that I ask you support of this bill are:

1. The NDGF cannot prove that baiting of deer contributes to the spread of CWD. It is their assumption!
2. If baiting is so bad, why do they still allow feeding of wildlife and support food plots?
3. It is impossible to keep deer from congregating, they do it naturally every year.
4. Most of the CWD is in the mule deer herd and they do not respond to bait.
5. In most areas of North Dakota whitetail hunting with archery equipment is almost impossible without bait.
6. By eliminating baiting on private land you almost make it impossible for older hunters or physically challenged hunters to be able to hunt with any degree of success.
7. As a landowner who loves wildlife and dedicates a lot of time and money to their maintenance I really take offense to the NDGF telling me what I can do on my own land! Believe me, that if I thought baiting caused or spread CWD I would not support this bill. I still support that the NDGF can determine what they want on public land.
8. This bill had tremendous support in the House last year but I believe because of some political shenanigans by the Governor and the Director of the NDGF it was killed in the Senate.
9. Please look through the smoke and ask about CWD funding as I believe this issue has a lot to do with money and therefore becomes political.

Thank you for your consideration and please support Senate Bill 2137.

Wade F. Williamson

SB 2137- Please Support

I am in support of bill SB2137. We should have the right to hunt over bait on our own property should we choose to and should not be left up to the government to make that decision for us.

Aaron Steckler

Hello All,

My name is Brody Salander. I grew hunting all my life even joining my family as soon as I was able to walk. As a lifelong resident of North Dakota, the passion for wildlife on this landscape fueled my desires to turn it into my career. I have now spent the last 6 years in the wildlife profession dedicating my heart and soul to wildlife in North Dakota. I have learned a lot in my time here as a wildlife professional and I continue to learn a lot as I perform research in our state unveiling information to help us better wildlife populations and management strategies. Enacting supplemental use of feeding and baiting into law would jeopardize the abilities of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department employees to make sound decisions for the good of the people and could impact the deer populations negatively for decades to come. The employees and NDGF have worked their entire lives studying, learning, and managing scenarios like this. They know what is best for North Dakota hunting even if it means sacrificing short term opportunities to bait for the long term, sustainable success of deer populations and future hunting. We need to allow them the ability to manage our wildlife so we can utilize the resources for years to come.

Thank you,

Brody Salander

My Name is Terry Kissner from Westhope, ND. I have been a bowhunter for 60 years, an archery instructor for 40+ years and was a competitive archer for many years during the 80s and 90s. I take young archers hunting for the first time and a bait pile to pull a deer close and hold them there gives me time to explain shot placement and where to aim. A lot of these kids have never been close to any wildlife and to see their eyes light up when any animal come close is priceless. I believe bait is just another tool a hunter uses just like the Indians used bait to pull animals into an area. I have witnessed 15 bucks by my stand in one night all use the same scrape and all 15 licked the same licking branch above the scrape and 2 does did the same. Further, a buck and doe exchange fluids in November and December. There's only one way to control CWD, and that is to eliminate every deer, moose and elk in North Dakota which I think everyone would agree is not the way to go.

For these reasons I urge a do pass on HB 2137.

Thanks, Terry Kissner

SB 2137- In Support of

Please support SB2137 to preserve my ability to feed and hunt on my own land. I help several youth and single mothers with hunting opportunities, and we need this rule to give back hunter opportunity.

Scott Lang

I am writing in opposition to Senate Bill 2137. Enacting this legislation would remove the ability for professionals to manage wildlife resources on behalf of the public. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is charged with managing fish and wildlife resources, and if their data suggests the best management practice for minimizing disease risk in big game animals is to restrict baiting, then our family supports this action. My family trusts the North Dakota Game and Fish Department staff, their data and their decisions on this matter, and we urge you to oppose Senate Bill 2137. Thank you for your consideration.  
Kevin and Erin Kading Bismarck, ND

January 16, 2025

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs  
RE: SB 2137

**IN SUPPORT**

50,000 deer tested over 22 years with 120 detections and ONE confirmation.  
\$1.6 million spent on CWD in North Dakota

Testing-Restricting- Culling is the “management” toolbox for CWD.

HUMAN DIMENSIONS to the balance of \$265K over 3 years to mold the minds of the people of North Dakota to fear CWD.

2009 Legislation assured the North Dakotans they can feed wildlife.

Please Do Pass SB 2137

-Dusty Backer

Living in the northeast corner of state, with almost no trees, without supplemental feeding bow season might as well not exist. As a farmer/sportsman I leave feed and food plots out to protect deer from harsh winters which can cause us to lose most of our deer population. Most of the feed I leave out never sees a hunter but I am not in favor of being told what I can or can not do on my own property. Regulations already don't allow feeding on public and that should be as far as those restrictions go.

If disease is the main concern our deer yard up over the winter in massive groups whether there is food available or not.

Dear members of the Senate Ag committee, I ask for a do pass vote on SB 2137.

I believe the ability to supplementally feed year-round is beneficial to North Dakotas deer herds, and I believe having to stop during archery and rifle season (we live in restricted 3A2) is actually hurting our herds health.

Being able to use minerals and high protein sources of feed helps bucks be less run down after the rut, along with giving all deer more energy/fat reserves to make it through winter months. If I can provide supplemental feed all the way through, I won't have to start after it is almost too late post archery season. Those extra months of supplemental feed might give those deer the extra boost to save even a small percentage of winter killed deer in North Dakota. I ask you to look out for North Dakotas deer herds health for both the present and the future. If we don't have a herd to protect in 20 years, what is it worth trying to stop a disease that might POTENTIALLY be an issue. In the last 15 years herd numbers have reduced from the ability to support 149,000 deer tags to 55,000. This is almost a 200 percent reduction in deer living on the landscape, with little hope of getting substantial habitat back to support a large growth trend. If we continue this trend, what will future hunting opportunities look like? Let's give the herd every chance we can in the present. Even helping 5% of the herd survive with supplemental feed through a winter/starvation makes a difference, especially with the snowball affect going into the future.

Help keep our deer herd numbers up where my children will have the opportunity to enjoy the sport I grew to love with my dad, and am watching my children grow to enjoy with their father.

I ask for a do pass vote on SB2137.

Thank you, Alison Thompson

**January 16, 2025**

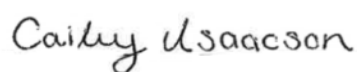
**RE: Senate Bill 2137 – Use of Supplemental Feed for Hunting**

Members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

I am writing to oppose Senate Bill 2137 (SB2137) that would strip the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF) of their ability to promulgate certain rules regarding hunting. Two of the seven tenants of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation are the Public Trust Doctrine and scientific management. Wildlife belongs to the public and is managed by government agencies on behalf of all citizens and managed based on the best available scientific research and findings. By approving SB 2137 we would be taking away the North Dakota Game and Fish Department to effectively manage deer populations for all citizens of North Dakota.

As highlighted in many of these “In Opposition” testimonials, approving SB 2137 sets a dangerous precedent for the future of wildlife and hunting management in the state of North Dakota. As a lifelong deer hunter myself, there is nothing I want more than sustainable deer populations and hunting opportunities now and in the future. Senate Bill 2137 would reduce NDGF’s decision making ability, flexibility, and effective management if approved. I respectfully ask you all to oppose Senate Bill 2137 and allow the North Dakota Game and Fish Department to continue in their mission to protect, conserve, and improve deer populations and ensure that these resources are available for public use in the long term.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cailey Isaacson".

Cailey Isaacson

I am in favor of SB 2137, the use of supplemental feed for hunting. I do not see any reasoning as to why we have a war on our deer heard in North Dakota over one positive test for CWD out of 50,000 tested deer over a 23-year period. The numbers do not add up. Any time that testing in any given matter is increased, ultimately the number of positive test results should increase also; however, with only one confirmed test result through a necropsy, that is a .00002 percentage chance of a deer having CWD. The deer that are testing positive are healthy deer that are usually harvested by hunters. The numbers and science do not confirm the fear that you are trying to install in the citizens of our state.

We need to stop accepting funds on CWD from the federal government because there is too much money being chased by our game and fish department. I think we also need to take away the director of North Dakota Game and Fish being appointed by our Governor. They should be put on a ballot and voted in by the people like any other public official.

I think our game and fish should spend more time on where we have real problems like EHD outbreaks that seem to be happening every year versus years ago when it was occurring every five to seven years. These outbreaks should not be happening every year and are more of a concern as a hunter because they kill more deer in one year than chronic wasting disease will ever kill in our lifetimes.

The game and fish trying to blame bating for deer herding in an area is absurd due to the fact that all ungulates are herd animals and tend to do herd more in northern climates as a tactic for survival in our harsh winters.

We need a change within our game and fish department. Conservation was put in place for the best interests of the fish and animals that we pursue, not a business that our game and fish are trying to make it into.

Game and Fish and hunters need to stop the war on our game animals.

- Jeremy Olson  
3583 139<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW  
Alexander, ND 58831  
(701) 509.7707

I ask that you please vote yes on SB 2137 and pass this bill.

I am in favor of SB 2137, the use of supplemental feed for hunting. The war that we are waging against our game animals is not supported by any facts. Over a 23-year period over 50,000 deer were tested for Chronic Wasting Disease ("CWD"), of those deer only 120 came back positive with the initial testing, of those 120 deer, only one came back confirmed by a necropsy testing. That is a 0.00002 percent chance within the 23-year period of a deer being harvested with CWD in our state. That percentage alone does not support our game and fish's agenda.

Thinking that by restricting supplemental feed for deer that our problem will simply go away is absurd. Deer are herding animals; they are going to herd together whether it be in a field that has been harvested or a food plot specifically planted to feed the deer. They herd together as a form of survival.

CWD is not the issue at hand; the issue that we should be spending our tax dollars on is EHD. Recently EHD has been spreading like wildfire taking out herds of deer all over our state, year after year there are more and more outbreaks, yet you do not see billboards spreading information to our citizens.

We need a change in our game and fish department. The federal agenda of decimating our deer herds over one positive test in over a 23-year period of 50,000 in our state is absurd. I think it is time that we start holding our game and fish department accountable for the oath that they took of protecting our wildlife, not getting to abolish it with no factual evidence to support their decision.

- Megan Olson  
3583 139<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW  
Alexander, ND 58831  
(701) 721.7161

SB 2137- In Support of

Andrew Mittleider

I support the rights to private land ownership that this bill supports. We need to get the power back to the landowners to not restrict use of private land ownership dealing with big game.

I am writing my testimony in opposition of SB 2137

I have been a North Dakota resident my whole life and my family has lived in this state for 5 generations each one of them being hunters. I have grown to love the natural resources that we are so fortunate to have in this state. SB 2137 would have dramatic impact on our game and fish agency from making decisions and putting in place laws to better our natural resources. Growing up I wanted to be a biologist more than anything, I went to college at the University of North Dakota to obtain a wildlife biology degree to have an impact on the things that I care most about, the wildlife that call our state home. This bill would hinder and set a dangerous precedent going forward that the game and fish will not have lawful grounds to make other decisions and laws. Biological decisions should be made by professionals who have dedicated their whole lives to bettering resources and have the resources best interest at heart. The wildlife of North Dakota is not any one persons to own, this is a biological issue that could have ramifications that will effect our future generations opportunities. The ban on baiting does not take away any opportunity from the public, the public still has every opportunity to hunt and take deer. The ban on baiting is a way to help slow the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease, if CWD gains a foothold in North Dakota this alone could take opportunity away from the sportsmen and women of North Dakota. I ask that you vote no on this bill not for me but for the future opportunities for not only my generation but the ones that are to follow.

Please support SB2137. It is ok to feed deer at any time, just not while hunting. Good thing deer know the difference. Please protect property rights for landowners.

SB 2137- In Support of

Kelsey Mittleider

I support SB 2137 because my whole family hunts and we want to preserve the right for us to continue doing this on our own private land. We need to put the power back to the people.

Dear Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

My name is Ryan Hammargren and I am writing to submit testimony in opposition to SB2137. I want my kids and grandkids to have the opportunity to harvest healthy deer in North Dakota.

I urge the committee to recommend a “Do Not Pass” on SB2137. Science must be utilized in this decision. Speak with the ND Game and Fish and surrounding biologist to make the right decision for the wildlife, the State, and the economic future of North Dakota.

Thank you for your time,  
Ryan

TESTIMONY OF JOHN BRADLEY  
NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
SENATE BILL 2137  
SENATE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 17, 2024

Chairman Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture and Veteran Affairs Committee:

For the record, I am John Bradley, Executive Director of the North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF). I'm here today representing our 1,500 members in 15 affiliated wildlife and sportsmen's clubs across North Dakota that make up the North Dakota Wildlife Federation. NDWF opposes SB 2137. This is not simply my opinion - this is an organization that is built on our grassroots. Our members and affiliates bring ideas forward through a delegate and resolution process, and just like you are elected to represent your districts, they represent their clubs and their members throughout the state. Our affiliates supported via our resolution process that, and I quote:

"Therefore, be it resolved that the North Dakota Wildlife Federation supports the North Dakota Game and Fish Chronic Wasting Disease and Surveillance Plan 2023 – 2027 and the proposed actions and strategies to manage and restrict the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease."

SB 2137 would severely undermine the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's (NDG&F) authority and ability to manage deer and deer hunting with the best-available science. Specifically, the bill removes the authority from NDG&F to issue rules or adopt a policy or practice prohibiting the supplemental feed on private property for the hunting of big game animals. The bill, and the removal of management authority from NDG&F, is a direct attempt to undermine chronic wasting disease (CWD) management efforts in the state and would have a detrimental impact on managing other diseases (bovine tuberculosis) as well.

The practice of baiting and its role in deer management has grown in terms of controversy and complexity in the last decade. Our deer managers are working hard to implement methods and tactics to mitigate the spread of diseases, specifically CWD. The science tells us that supplemental feeding (baiting) increases unnatural, man-made density around a single food source and therefore increases the potential for direct and indirect contact among individuals. We understand that natural congregation occurs in our deer herds, but we shouldn't remove what we as humans can control from our management toolbox. When it comes to CWD, we are buying our future selves time to figure this disease out and discover new ways to reduce and someday hopefully eliminate CWD from the landscape. Outside of CWD, there are 11 other deer diseases that are thought to be spread by direct contact, including bovine tuberculosis (TB), some of these diseases, left unchecked, can severely impact our livestock producers as well.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) cites that unnatural concentration of cervids facilitates CWD transmission and establishment if CWD prions are present. AFWA,

(which is made up from every state game and fish agency, as well as the National Rifle Association, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Boone and Crockett Club, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, National Wildlife Federation, Wild Sheep Foundation, etc.) lists the prohibition of baiting or feeding wild deer as a best management tool for the prevention of CWD introduction and establishment. SB 2137 intentionally removes this management tool from the authority of NDG&F.

Furthermore, this bill would also have a negative impact on hunting opportunities for sportsmen and women. Healthy wildlife populations are essential to the sustainability of hunting opportunities, and the spread of diseases such as CWD and TB can have a significant impact on these opportunities. By limiting the ability of the department to protect wildlife populations from disease, SB 2137 would also limit the opportunities for deer hunting in the long run. Wildlife management decisions, and especially disease management decisions, should remain in the hands of professional wildlife managers. SB 2137 would result in a massive setback for disease and deer management in North Dakota. We urge a Do Not Pass on SB 2137.

Additional information on Bovine Tuberculosis:

### **Bovine Tuberculosis and Baiting**

Bovine tuberculosis (Bovine TB) is a disease found in mammals caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium bovis* (*M. bovis*). In North America, Bovine TB is most commonly found in domestic cattle and captive and wild cervids (white-tailed deer, elk, etc.) Bovine TB has been greatly reduced in the cattle industry since the National Cooperative State-Federal Bovine Tuberculosis eradication program began in 1917. Currently, most states are accredited as "Bovine Tuberculosis-free" by the United States Department of Agriculture, however, outbreaks do still occur throughout the United States. Cattle, captive cervids, and wild white-tailed deer are considered reservoir hosts for Bovine TB. A reservoir host is a species in which Bovine TB can persist and be transmitted among individuals within a species or be transmitted to another species. Wild white-tailed deer may pose the greatest threat to the establishment of Bovine TB on the landscape because they move freely across the landscape and may contact multiple domestic cattle herds.

Both Michigan and Minnesota have had outbreaks of Bovine TB in wild white-tailed deer. In September 2005, the first case of bovine tuberculosis (BTB) in 34 years was discovered in Minnesota and led to a loss of Minnesota's Bovine TB free status. In October 2007 and January and February 2008, four additional cattle herds and deer infected with BTB were discovered in Roseau and Beltrami counties and Minnesota's BTB status was changed from "modified accredited advanced" to "modified accredited" in April 2008. Each of these designations increased regulatory requirements (and costs) for animal testing, record keeping, eradication practices, slaughtering and shipments of cattle within state and across state lines. The 2005-2009 BTB outbreak in Minnesota, which involved 12 infected herds, was estimated to cost approximately \$60 million. (Buhr et al., 2009). This estimate did not include the cost of ongoing

heightened surveillance efforts in the region, nor the economic impact of the outbreak on the broader Minnesota cattle industry.

### **How can Bovine TB spread?**

Cattle, captive cervids, and wild white-tailed deer can contract BTB through direct contact with an infected animal, either another deer or cattle or through shared feeding with an infected animal at artificial bait piles, and areas where cattle are fed or cattle feed is stored.

### **Why is Bovine TB an important issue in wild deer?**

Human health is the main concern; given that Bovine TB is transmissible to humans. Additionally, Bovine TB is not a naturally occurring disease in white-tailed deer. Deer can also be a reservoir for Bovine TB potentially transmitting Bovine TB to uninfected deer and also to uninfected cattle through direct contact or through shared feeding. Because deer are free-ranging they have the potential to contact multiple cattle herds and transmit Bovine TB across the landscape.

### **Baiting Bans as a Tool**

Bovine tuberculosis (BTB) is spread through similar mechanisms as CWD, making it a useful model for understanding CWD. Baiting and feeding has demonstrably been shown to facilitate increased transmission of BTB in deer. Baiting and feeding enabled the BTB outbreak in Michigan to persist and spread. Infection rates decreased after restrictions were applied. These continue to be a pivotal component of reducing the spread of this disease within deer and limiting the economic impact to the cattle industry.

### **Why is SB 2137 harmful?**

Wildlife management decisions, and especially disease management decisions, should remain in the hands of professional wildlife managers. SB 2137 would result in a massive setback for wildlife and livestock disease in North Dakota. If a Bovine TB outbreak were to occur, the ND Game & Fish Department would be limited in their tools to help the landowner and the livestock industry fight the spread of Bovine TB.

### **Sources:**

Cosgrove MK, O'Brien DJ, Ramsey DSL. 2018. Baiting and feeding revisited: modeling factors influencing transmission of tuberculosis among deer and to cattle. *Front. Vet. Sci.* 5:306

Buhr Brian, McKeever Kyle, Adachi Kenji. 2009. Economic impact of bovine tuberculosis on Minnesota's cattle and beef sector

SB 2137- In Support of

Scott Schmidt

I am asking that you support SB2137. The property that I own has been developed with cover and food plots and in the past I've placed supplemental feed locations that youth and handicap hunters have used. I would like to continue allowing them to hunt.

SB 2137- In Support of

Shawn Harpole

Please support SB2137 to help protect property rights and get our North Dakota Game and Fish focused on important things like more access to public hunting and habitat.



FOUNDED IN 1887 BY

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

**BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB**

January 16, 2025

Sen. Larry Luick, Chair  
North Dakota Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee  
600 E Boulevard Ave.  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Re: Boone & Crockett Club Opposition to SB 2137

Dear Sen. Luick,

The Boone and Crockett Club writes in opposition to SB 2137 and respectfully requests that you vote "No" when this bill comes to a vote in your committee.

Wildlife management decisions in North Dakota, particularly those decisions aimed at addressing the spread of disease, should be guided by the best available science. We believe the North Dakota Game and Fish Department is best equipped to make those decisions. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a contagious and 100% fatal disease that threatens the long-term health, sustainability, and resilience of North Dakota's wild deer populations. Research has repeatedly demonstrated that infectious prions associated with CWD can persist in man-placed mineral licks, soil, feeders, and baiting sites, facilitating horizontal and environmental transmission among animals with prolonged and repeated contact with these materials.

This legislation would undermine the ability of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department to effectively fulfill its mission to "protect, conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitat for sustained public consumptive and non-consumptive use." The Department acts as trustee of North Dakota's big game resources and has demonstrated its commitment to addressing conservation challenges, including the use of baiting restrictions in areas where disease transmission risks are highest. SB 2137 attempts to strip the Department's authority over baiting regulations and is counterproductive to over 15 years of CWD management efforts.

It is imperative that the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, the agency specifically established by this legislature to protect the state's fish and wildlife resources, retain its authority to regulate baiting in the face of chronic wasting disease. Preserving this authority is critical to ensuring the health and resilience of North Dakota's wildlife.

We respectfully request you oppose SB 2137.

Sincerely,

Tony Schoonen, CEO  
Boone and Crockett Club

Only 1 deer has been found dead in ND that died with(not from)CWD please recommend a DO PASS on SB 2137.

SB 2137- In Support

Mike Lindquist

Please support SB 2137. I bow hunt with my daughters and we utilize feed. We feel that the deer are here for us to enjoy and the game and fish should work management through their quotas.

Dear Committee I strongly urge you to pass Bill 2137.

My name is Chandler Jacob and I am from Minot, ND. I have been hunting big game in ND for over 20 years. Myself and a majority of people have issues with how the Game and Fish are handling CWD. It is important to understand that it's not illegal to supplemental feed. Its only illegal when you start actively pursuing animals over it. Deer by nature are social animals, so the idea that it will stop the spread is silly in my opinion. I believe us as sportsman need to take the opposite approach and help deer throughout harsh winter. In past winters deer numbers have significantly declined to do lack of food. The game and fish are spreading fear using CWD when there has only been one deer death to CWD. 2 years ago half the deer herd died due to EHD and there has been zero interest in that or how to slow it down. Why hasn't the game and fish looked into that? They tell us to trust their science but it continues to be debunked. They have a CWD plan in place and in the last two years, have not even followed their own program. If CWD is so scary why are they not banning units that should have been banned two years ago based off their program. You guys will hear some more great information Friday morning. But for these reasons I hope you vote Yes to 2137.

As a wild game chef who makes his living developing recipes using the wildlife of North Dakota, I strongly oppose Senate Bill 2137.

SB 2137 threatens the ND Game & Fish Department's ability to manage our wildlife resources effectively by restricting their authority to regulate baiting practices, a critical part of their Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management Plan.

My opposition is grounded in the belief that wildlife management should be driven by the expertise of our wildlife biologists, not by legislation that undermines their ability to carry out their responsibilities. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is tasked with managing wildlife for the benefit of all North Dakotans, both present and future, as enshrined in the North Dakota Constitution. Article XI, Section 27, ensures that hunting, fishing, and trapping are valued aspects of our heritage and are managed by law and regulation for the public good. This constitutional mandate underscores the importance of making decisions based on science and the best interests of our wildlife, not short-term political pressures.

Allowing baiting practices, especially in areas affected by CWD, directly contradicts the principles of responsible wildlife management. While I respect some hunters' traditions of hunting over a bait pile, the science is clear: baiting contributes to the spread of CWD. This bill is not in the best interest of our deer population or the hunters like me who rely on them. It also undermines the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's ability to fulfill its legal obligations and protect wildlife resources for all North Dakotans.

I strongly oppose Senate Bill 2137. I urge legislators to vote NO on this bill and allow our North Dakota wildlife biologists to continue their important work in managing our state's wildlife resources.

Sincerely,

Jeff Benda  
Fargo, ND  
[www.wildgameandfish.com](http://www.wildgameandfish.com)

<html><head></head><body style="overflow-wrap: break-word; -webkit-nspace-mode: space; line-break: after-white-space;"><p style="margin: 0px; font-style: normal; font-variant-caps: normal; font-stretch: normal; font-size: 12px; line-height: normal; font-family: Helvetica; font-size-adjust: none; font-kerning: auto; font-variant-alternates: normal; font-variant-ligatures: normal; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; font-variant-position: normal; font-variant-emoji: normal; font-feature-settings: normal; font-optical-sizing: auto; font-variation-settings: normal;">I am asking that you please vote yes on SB</p>

<p style="margin: 0px; font-style: normal; font-variant-caps: normal; font-stretch: normal; font-size: 12px; line-height: normal; font-family: Helvetica; font-size-adjust: none; font-kerning: auto; font-variant-alternates: normal; font-variant-ligatures: normal; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; font-variant-position: normal; font-variant-emoji: normal; font-feature-settings: normal; font-optical-sizing: auto; font-variation-settings: normal;">2137. Over the last 20 plus years there have been over 40,000 deer tested in ND and only 130 detections (less the 1% of the deer tested) and all them deer were killed by hunters not CWD. The North Dakota game and fish has killed more deer than CWD has when they slaughtered over 40 deer just to test (all came back negative) and they also wasted all the meat instead of donating it when they did that. Deer are constantly coming in contact with each in the wild weather its at feed or just naturally browsing, licking each other to help each other clean themselves, or during the breeding season when the bucks and doe are all sharing bodily fluids urine and more.</p>

<p style="margin: 0px; font-style: normal; font-variant-caps: normal; font-stretch: normal; font-size: 12px; line-height: normal; font-family: Helvetica; font-size-adjust: none; font-kerning: auto; font-variant-alternates: normal; font-variant-ligatures: normal; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; font-variant-position: normal; font-variant-emoji: normal; font-feature-settings: normal; font-optical-sizing: auto; font-variation-settings: normal;">At scrapes and licking branches all deer in the area visit them and make nose contact and urinate at them spots just to see who is all in the area. The numbers don't back up the NDGF claim of how contagious or deadly it is. If it was truly as contagious and deadly as they claim the deer herd should be wiped out by now. EHD and hard winters are the real killers of deer in ND. I feel NDGF should quit focusing on CWD and turn there attention to them 2 things if they actually care about "protecting the herd"</p>

<p style="margin: 0px; font-style: normal; font-variant-caps: normal; font-stretch: normal; font-size: 12px; line-height: normal; font-family: Helvetica; font-size-adjust: none; font-kerning: auto; font-variant-alternates: normal; font-variant-ligatures: normal; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; font-variant-position: normal; font-variant-emoji: normal; font-feature-settings: normal; font-optical-sizing: auto; font-variation-settings: normal;">Thanks for your time</p>

<p style="margin: 0px; font-style: normal; font-variant-caps: normal; font-stretch: normal; font-size: 12px; line-height: normal; font-family: Helvetica; font-size-adjust: none; font-kerning: auto; font-variant-alternates: normal; font-variant-ligatures: normal; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; font-variant-position: normal; font-variant-emoji: normal; font-feature-settings: normal; font-optical-sizing: auto; font-variation-settings: normal;">Yes on SB 2137&nbsp;  </p><p style="margin: 0px; font-style: normal; font-variant-caps: normal; font-stretch: normal; font-size: 12px; line-height: normal; font-family: Helvetica; font-size-adjust: none; font-kerning: auto; font-variant-alternates: normal; font-variant-ligatures: normal; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; font-variant-position: normal; font-variant-emoji: normal; font-feature-settings: normal; font-optical-sizing: auto; font-variation-settings: normal;">Thank you for your yes vote</p><p style="margin: 0px; font-style: normal; font-variant-caps: normal; font-stretch: normal; font-size: 12px; line-height: normal; font-family: Helvetica; font-size-adjust: none; font-kerning: auto; font-variant-alternates: normal; font-variant-ligatures: normal; font-variant-numeric: normal; font-variant-east-asian: normal; font-variant-position: normal; font-variant-emoji: normal; font-feature-settings: normal; font-optical-sizing: auto; font-variation-settings: normal;">Eric Schlieve&nbsp;  </p></body></html>

SB 2137- In Support

Rick Mittleider

Please support SB 2137. I am a private land owner and want the right to bait deer if I choose to and I don't like the idea of the ND Game and Fish having that power over me.

Hello, I am writing you to ask that you oppose SB2137. I am a fourth generation North Dakotan and avid hunter. This bill is ballot box biology and is taking a tool away from our Game and Fish agency to help minimize disease potential in our big game populations. I personally have baited deer and hunted over it in the past and have family that still hunt over bait (in a non CWD unit) and we have seen with trail camera pictures how congregated deer can be with bait piles. Some will say that bait piles are no different than a food plot or a corn field in the winter but I have also seen both of those and they are not the same; bait piles artificially congregate deer at a much higher degree which according to the professionals and scientists increases the likelihood that CWD would transmit and spread. We will stop baiting and supplementally feeding deer if the game and fish determines that our unit should stop the practice of doing so. This is not a private property rights issue, it is an issue of doing what is best for the public resource of wildlife for all current and future residents of this state by letting the professionals do their job.

As legislators for the state of North Dakota you are elected Trustees of the Public Trust which includes the states wildlife, and you are entrusted to protect this resource for current and future beneficiaries of that trust which are all current and future residents of this state. Letting the professionals at the Game and Fish do their job is what is best for the future of our wildlife.

Please oppose SB2137

Thank you,

Members of the Senate Ag committee, I ask for a do pass on SB 2137.

I have deer hunted my entire life and love to archery hunt more than anything. I have always used supplemental feed up until our unit became restricted. Our yard in the winter can hold up to 600-700 deer. Overall, due to our livestock feed and us supplementally feeding to provide for wildlife over winter, it seems the deer herd in our yard has better survival rates then the other herds in the area we're not able to help as much. I think this restriction that the game and fish put in place hurts more then it helps.

Please support the sportsmen of North Dakota (80% in favor testimony) in allowing hunting over supplemental feed.

Please vote do pass on SB 2137.

01/16/2025

Hello Committee members,

I am writing to voice my support for SB 2137. The “scientific” argument does not add up, especially since the Game and Fish doesn’t even follow their own recommended management practices. This begs the question: Are we fighting a disease? If so, how serious is it, really? Or is the NDG&F just trying to stop hunters from hunting over wildlife feed? The NDG&F has made their stance known about the ethics of hunting over feed and how they do not agree with it from an ethical standpoint, they will not admit it now because of the negative attention it drew to them, but they made it known in their testimony over a previous bill that was a major topic of discussion a decade or so ago.

Please help protect sportsmens rights and vote yes on SB 2137. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Goodman  
Minot, ND

SB 2137- In Support

Reggie Luhmann

Please support SB 2137. I am in support of the landowners having the actual rights they deserve and against the ND Game and Fish taking them from us.

SB 2137- In Support

Keaton Luhmann

Please consider supporting SB 2137. I bowhunt with my family and we utilize feeding to hunt. I feel we should have that choice on our own private land.

SB 2137- In Support

Chase Luhmann

I would like it if you would consider support for SB 2137. We bowhunt and the ND Game and Fish is violating our private property rights to bowhunt in the manner we choose.

The CWD numbers do not back up what is being pushed by the game and fish. Or any agency across the country i ask we use common sense and please pass SB 2137.

Thanks

Dear Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

My name is Sarah Bickerdyke and I am writing to submit testimony in opposition of SB2137. It is important that my children and grandchildren have the opportunity to harvest healthy deer in North Dakota, in turn developing future generations of ethical outdoorsmen and women with an inherent passion to continue seeing conservation through to future generations. It is important that we set a strong foundation for ethical, resilient, and science-based wildlife management in North Dakota now and in the future.

I urge the committee to recommend a "Do Not Pass" on SB2137.

Thank you for your time,  
Sarah Bickerdyke

SB 2137

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs  
Committee,

I oppose SB 2137. This bill, if passed, would eliminate a tool that has been sparingly utilized by the North Dakota Game and Fish where needed as an effective measure to fight impacts to our deer herd. The Game and Fish Department is an agency of extremely well trained wildlife professionals, who are employed by the citizens to manage our wildlife, and funded by tax payer dollars. Implementing this bill would effectively hamstring their efforts to protect our deer herds.

Many state have outright banned baiting for many years, and the argument that baiting is the only reason that people find success or youth get into hunting is simply not true. The elimination of baiting in certain units will likely increase the opportunity for many hunters who may hunt smaller parcels of land or use public access properties, because deer will return to a natural pattern of movement. I am not here to debate the ethics of baiting, but I am strongly opposed to taking away a tool that our educated professionals have deemed necessary.

The introduction of this bill is a waste of time and energy for legislators during a busy legislative session, as a similar bill was heard and killed during the 2023 session. Please let the skilled and educated staff that work for the very agency that our dollars fund make the decisions they need, and kill this bill in committee. The legislature should leave the biology to the professionals.

Thank you,  
Sam Devries  
Bismarck, ND

I am in support of SB 2137.

Hello Senate committee members,

01/16/2025

I am writing to you in support of SB 2137. I question the science that the game and fish is stating that they are using. They do not even follow their own protocols when it comes to enforcing a baiting ban for units within close proximity to a positive case. Why would they do this? They claim that it is in the best interest of the deer to control CWD, but units close to large populations of hunters, they have refrained from implementing the baiting restrictions...this sounds very politically driven to me.

Also, with talk of CWD as a threat to deer herds, why isn't there any discussion regarding EHD and the effects it has had on our deer herd over the past few years. This disease can wipe out a large population of deer in just a few weeks, not like CWD which supposedly takes a couple of years from its infection to kill its host. Where is the funding and research for this awful disease that has killed more deer in North Dakota in one year than CWD has killed throughout the majority of the United States? Evidently this is about more than supposed disease prevention, it is obviously about Ethics and Federal funds available to the NDG&F.

Please vote yes on SB 2137. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Brent Wollschlager  
Parshall, ND

Hello Senate committee members,

01/16/2025

I am writing to you in support of SB 2137. I question the science that the game and fish is stating that they are using. They do not even follow their own protocols when it comes to enforcing a baiting ban for units within close proximity to a positive case. Why would they do this? They claim that it is in the best interest of the deer to control CWD, but units close to large populations of hunters, they have refrained from implementing the baiting restrictions...this sounds very politically driven to me.

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Please vote yes on SB 2137. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Kayla Wollschlager  
Parshall, ND

I am writing this letter to you in support of SB 2137.

Hunting is one of the main reasons that I have stayed in ND and have raised my family here. I grew up hunting with my family and have continued that tradition with my own family.

Bowhunting deer is actually the ONLY opportunity the average citizen of North Dakota has to hunt big game in this state on a yearly basis. Elk, moose, and bighorn sheep are once in a lifetime. Antelope takes 10 to 15 years to draw a tag. A gun deer tag takes 3 to 7 years to draw a tag.

When hear all the time that we need to get today's youth involved in the outdoors!!! What a fantastic opportunity it is to sit with a young hunter in a blind over a small pile of corn... and observe wildlife at close range and guide/teach them to take an ethical shot at a deer. Being able to do this on a yearly basis can/will instill that love for the sport that will stay with them!

Similarly, the 'older generation' is still able to continue to hunt big game, which many of them have done for decades. They may not be able to climb a tree, or walk through deep snow, and sit along a trail hoping for a deer to come by, but they can get out and enjoy hunting with a reasonable chance of success (something that they have been doing for 40 or 50 years).

The same goes for any handicapped person that wants to hunt.

Baiting deer simply increases the chance of having an enjoyable and successful hunt.

Feedlots and hay yards may have 100s of deer coming to them to eat for months at a time over the winter. BUT I believe a few pounds of corn on the ground attracting a handful of deer would hardly be a threat to spreading CWD, which is the narrative we hear from our Game and Fish Department.

And on the grounds of 'ethics'... Should we eliminate crossbows, compound bows, retractable broadheads, sights, rangefinders, binoculars and hunt with a spear? Could make the same argument about fishing or any other activity.

We are lucky to have the opportunities that we do have in ND compared to many other states...it would be so unfortunate to lose what we do have!

So, I please urge you to support and vote yes on SB 2137 and keep the hunting heritage strong in North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Jamie Risovi

New Rockford

SB 2137

Senators,

Please vote in favor of this bill. Baiting is wanted in North Dakota and I think the people have shown their feelings in the matter. I have yet to see facts from science that show this disease is a large threat to deer populations across the state. My mind could be changed if science could show us that CWD was spreading rapidly and was an actual threat to deer populations. Currently they cannot even show us what a "prion" from the disease looks like. This bill is protecting hunters rights. Why is the government concerned about what people can and cannot do on private property to harvest a deer? North Dakota's Game and Fish Department can prove 1 deer has had CWD in the time frame that they have been monitoring this disease. Unfortunately as a hunter I have been forgotten about by North Dakotas Game and Fish Department. License costs are up higher than ever before, while opportunity continues to decline. They also dropped the ball big time managing the deer herd after the winter of 2023 when across the state we saw thousands of deer die from starvation. I also would like to point out that the majority of the "opposition" to this bill comes from out of state interests, organization and or employees of those out of state interests. Please give SB 2137 a "DO PASS" .

Thanks

Ken Carbary

701 230-2875

As a father of young children I am asking that you please vote to pass SB 2137. I would like to be able to use feed if I have to to draw wildlife into me to keep my kids interested and get them hooked on hunting whether it be squirrels pheasants or deer I just want them to enjoy the outdoors. Let's not lose a generation of hunters. Please don't take an opportunity away from me or my kids to enjoy what ND has to offer and vote yes on SB 2137.

Thank you

Senate Ag Committee Members.

I am writing you to ask for you to DO PASS SB 2137. Vote by the numbers; pertaining to the wishes of your constituents and lift the ban as you will find that is what the majority of voters, landowners, outdoors people and hunters are in favor of the ban and restriction being lifted. I thank you for your time and trust you will do what is right.

Thanks,  
Corey Mulhair

I'm writing in opposition to SB2137. Since the 2023 session I have read countless studies that point to the lethality of Chronic Wasting Disease. The broad scientific consensus is that this disease is 100% fatal once contracted. By not allowing the Game and Fish Department to ban the practice of baiting as a method of take during the hunting season, you are removing one of the few tools they have to prevent the spread of known contagious prion. We are already at disadvantage of preventing the spread, by allowing feeding of wildlife throughout the remainder of the year. If there is any measurable preventive action we can take to help slow the spread of CWD, we should be utilizing it.

If passed, you'd be setting a dangerous precedent by allowing emotions dictate what is best for the North Dakota deer population, rather than allowing trained and educated employees of the Department, in a specific field, determine what is best for the resource. It has not been uncommon the last few decades for states that have had a strong hunting background to allow legislation to pass that was introduced by individuals that wanted to take away that hunting tradition completely. While I do understand why some may practice baiting, as I have used it in the past, I do not understand their selfish intentions of wanting to use bait over the long-term health of the herd.

Common sense prevailed in the Senate during the 2023 session and I hope it will again. I strongly recommend a DO NOT PASS of SB2137.

Liam Hale  
DISTRICT 5- Minot

SB 2137

Chairman Luick, Honorable Agriculture and Veterans Affairs committee members,

I am writing to urge you to oppose Senate Bill 2137 which was penned by a small special interest group disgruntled with the Game and Fish attempting to do what the ND constitution guides them to do which is manage the states wildlife resources for the good of all citizens of our State. The issue of stemming Chronic Wasting Disease was hashed out two years ago in the last legislative session, and the information and real world case studies since then have only strengthened, if not proven, that defeating this same Bill was the right decision back then.

This is absolutely not a property rights issue. The wildlife of our state are held as a Public Trust for all citizens, which is why I have absolutely no problem as a hunter and a taxpayer providing private landowners compensation if my (our) deer cause damage to either their property or income stream. Robust populations can be an inconvenience to those working the land that interfaces or contains the habitats needed to support them, but the enjoyment I obtain from seeing, hunting, and consuming our big game is well worth spending my sportsman and tax dollars to offset any issues they cause. I do have a huge problem with a small group of individuals thinking they know better than the trained professionals and pushing for scenarios that have been shown to have negative population level impacts and from which there is no current evidence of any ability to reverse. Whereas the majority of our citizens are more than happy to make sacrifices to compensate private landowners, why is it that activities which occur on private land that threaten my (our) deer can't be regulated by trained wildlife professionals using the best information available to ensure the best possible outcomes in the face of a novel and devastating disease? It has always been and needs to continue to be a two way relationship for something held as a Public Trust for the benefit of all citizens of our great state. Please vote NO on this selfish bill.

Dave Brandt  
Buchanan, ND

I am in support of 2137.

They want to ban baiting in my area but yet food/bait plots are totally acceptable, heck the game and fish will help pay for them! In the middle of winter where are the deer that are left in an area piled up at? An unharvested food/bait plot. The Game and fish is spending millions on CWD that has killed what one or two confirmed deer? Yet EHD blue tongue comes through an area and wipes out almost 90% of the population and we have had 3-4 years of EHD, its hard to find a whitetail deer in allot of places. And yet our game and fish still gives out a bunch of tags for these areas that have no deer left, it makes no sense. We can feed deer we just can't hunt where we are feeding them, how much sense does that make? We live in wide open western ND, bow hunting in this area is extremely difficult because the deer aren't very patternable. You could sit every day for weeks and not have a deer walk past you. Its hard enough to get kids involved in hunting, most kids can't sit for weeks hoping something walks by. But if you can afford a food/bait plot you can put up a stand and shoot something that walks in to eat it and that's fine and dandy. Again it makes no sense. I could go on and on. Another thing I am seeing is bow hunters taking way longer shots now days. It used to be they could get a 15-30 yard shot when bait was legal to hunt over. Now if something walks out in front of them at 50-100 yards they will fling an arrow at it, many times wounding that animal. I am disabled and baiting definitely helped me. Anyways I just see this CWD excuse as a way to take away many folks hunting oppotunities.

Thank you for your time.

Chad Miller

I'm writing in opposition to SB2137. ND Game and Fish is made up of knowledgeable professionals whose job it is to protect our wildlife. If they aren't the best ones to decide what hunting practices are a danger to our wildlife, then who is? It would be completely irresponsible to take wildlife management out of the hands of wildlife experts. The herd should be protected so that there will be a herd for generations to come. We have to care more about the future of the herd, than of our desire to bait deer so that we can have an "easy fill" of a deer tag. Unfortunately, many North Dakota hunters are physically unable to walk out to hunt a deer, and while I am sympathetic to that, I believe that in the grand scheme of things, if we're not careful about monitoring CWD (and how baiting affects the spread) and allowing proper officials to make necessary decisions about the health of the herd, then we might get into a situation where no one can hunt at all because the herd is basically gone. Instead of bowing to the testimonies from those

claiming that they "need" to bait, or have the "right to" bait, we should think logically and stand firm with the stance that the herd is more important than any one person. And the herd belongs to the people of North Dakota, not to the property owner. This bill was defeated last session, and I would like to see it defeated again. Vote NO on Bill SB 2137.

-Kelly Hale

District 5 - Minot

**2025 SB 2137 Testimony****Authored by:** Tim Sandstrom**Dear Committee,**

I strongly support SB 2137 and respectfully ask you to vote **DO PASS** on this bill.

Two years ago, I submitted similar testimony supporting HB 1151, which aimed to create a compromise between ethics, the irony of wildlife feeding versus hunting over food sources, and perceived science. Unfortunately, instead of fostering collaboration, a bait-and-switch occurred when some elected legislators voted to kill good-faith efforts.

I understand the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's (NDGF) concerns regarding chronic wasting disease (CWD). The debate about managing CWD continues among game and fish departments, landowners, and hunters nationwide. To this day, there appears to be no definitive solution.

For me, it all comes down to **perception**.

According to the *Fargo InForum*, NDGF Wildlife Chief Casey Anderson stated:

"Baiting causes deer to concentrate more closely than they do naturally in winter. Baiting during hunting season increases the duration of that concentration."

He further explained:

"Disease is spread by urine, saliva, and feces. It's more likely to be spread when they're pulled together in times of year when they normally aren't."

Mr. Anderson's perception is that hunters using bait are more likely to spread disease compared to natural deer congregation.

However, here's an example from my experience:

In 2023, while preparing my testimony for HB 1151, we experienced a particularly tough winter. On my daily drive home, I passed five alfalfa bales. Four bales sat abandoned in an alfalfa field, unused for hay. The fifth bale was purposefully placed in a neighbor's yard to help wildlife survive the winter.

For two months, I observed multiple deer feeding and bedding on these bales, with groups of 20 or more gathering at both the "abandoned" and "purposefully placed" locations.

Using Mr. Anderson's logic, the deer feeding at the four "naturally" abandoned bales posed no elevated risk. Yet, the single bale placed by my neighbor would, according to NDGF's perception, be "more likely" to spread disease.

This inconsistency is hard to reconcile. Additionally, NDGF has no rules, nor is there any legislated law, prohibiting people from feeding wildlife outside the context of hunting.

As you consider recommending the passage of SB 2137, I encourage you to ask: **Who is being more reasonable in these scenarios?** My example is real, and I'm certain you've witnessed or heard of countless similar situations.

I acknowledge that diseases like CWD have impacts, and they can and will spread. However, to single out hunters and landowners for punishment based on perceived risk is unfair—especially when we see far more deer deaths caused by motor vehicles or diseases like Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) than by CWD. And it's not even close.

I respectfully urge you to recommend passage of SB 2137.

**Best regards,**  
Tim Sandstrom

Source – Fargo Inforum: [Bill would stop officials from banning deer baiting in North Dakota](#)



**BACKCOUNTRY  
HUNTERS & ANGLERS  
NORTH DAKOTA**

**TESTIMONY OF BROCK WAHL  
NORTH DAKOTA BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS  
SENATE BILL 2137  
HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCE COMMITTEE  
January 17, 2025**

The North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers recommends a **Do Not Pass** on Senate Bill 2137 of the 69th legislative assembly. This bill would strip authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish to implement their CWD Management Plan by prohibiting the Game and Fish from banning baiting practices. Just like the 2023 baiting bill (HB1151) we view this as ballot box biology.

While our chapter does not have a stance on baiting ethics, we do have a stance on legislation or ballot initiatives that seek to restrict or control the ability of the wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties. Duties that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations, and as stated in Article XI, Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution,

**“Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good.”**

The public trust doctrine, supported by over a century of federal case law, makes it clear that all North Dakotans own the wildlife. This is codified in North Dakota Century code Section 20.1-03-03,

**“The ownership of and title to all wildlife within this state is in the state for the purpose of regulating the enjoyment, use, possession, disposition, and conservation thereof, and for maintaining action for damages as herein provided.” and “The state has a property interest in all protected wildlife. This interest supports a civil action for damages for the unlawful destruction of wildlife by willful or grossly negligent act or omission.”**

Our fellow North Dakotans at the Game and Fish act as our trustees and it is their responsibility to manage the public’s trust assets (the wildlife), for the benefit of the trust corpus and all beneficiaries, both alive and unborn. With that in mind, this is not a private property rights issue; this is about publicly owned wildlife, making this a public property rights issue. And the hunting practices of a single user group do not outweigh what is beneficial for the entire public resource or the beneficiaries. Allowing baiting practices to continue in the face of a contagious and 100% fatal disease is not responsible care of our wildlife assets. We believe it is not only responsible, but necessary for the department to ban baiting practices where chronic wasting disease is found.

This bill would effectively undo over 15 years of management by the North Dakota Game and Fish to slow the spread of CWD. Since the first CWD positive deer was found in 2009, the department has spent 6 million dollars on 500 hay yard projects for landowners, to help keep animals from congregating on silage piles, hay yards, and other alternative food sources.

There is no doubt that baiting practices contribute to the spread of chronic wasting disease. Infectious prions can be found in man placed mineral licks, in the soil around those mineral licks, on feeders, and in bait piles. Research efforts have repeatedly demonstrated horizontal and environmental transmission in animals that have prolonged and repeated contact with infectious materials. Research in Saskatchewan, Michigan, and Mississippi has found that man placed food sources represent by far, the largest aggregation of cervids and leads to the most focal contact with their environment. In other words, there is no activity that congregates deer more, putting them in direct contact with other deer and potentially contaminated environments, than artificial food sources. More than natural winter herding, natural food sources, bedding, and even breeding behaviors. Additionally, there are no examples of high prevalence rates of CWD within a deer herd not having negative impacts to that population. Some are less significant, others more severe and dramatic, but all impacts are negative. This is backed up by multiple population studies GPS collaring thousands of deer.

While we sympathize with the hunters this change affects, and we understand changing long held practices can be difficult, the resource must come first. With over half the states in the nation having banned baiting and feeding of wildlife, we are confident that North Dakota hunters will adapt and overcome to be successful in the field just like the other states. We understand that baiting bans alone will not stop CWD, that deer do naturally congregate, and some of those natural occurrences will never be a variable managers can control in wild animals. But we also believe it is disingenuous to suggest that hundreds of bait piles and feeders on the landscape, being replenished repeatedly throughout the year, does not directly exacerbate the spread of CWD.

While we were disappointed to see the Department's concessions over the 2023 baiting bill, we understand their desire to try and work with hunters as best they can. While the ND Game and Fish department cannot ban feeding, unless for purposes of hunting, we agree that banning baiting where CWD is found removes the incentive to feed and will also lead to a reduction in feeding. It is our stance that the department does have the legal authority to ban feeding, and we would support joining a majority of the states in the nation and implementing a feeding ban in the units that are under baiting restrictions.

This bill is not in the best interest of the deer held in public trust, or the North Dakota public hunters who are beneficiaries of that trust. The North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers finds S.B. 2137 to be in direct violation of the North Dakota constitution, the North Dakota century code, the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, the mission of the North Dakota Game and Fish, and a breach of the public trust doctrine.

**We strongly oppose S.B. 2137**

**Board of Directors**

**North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers**

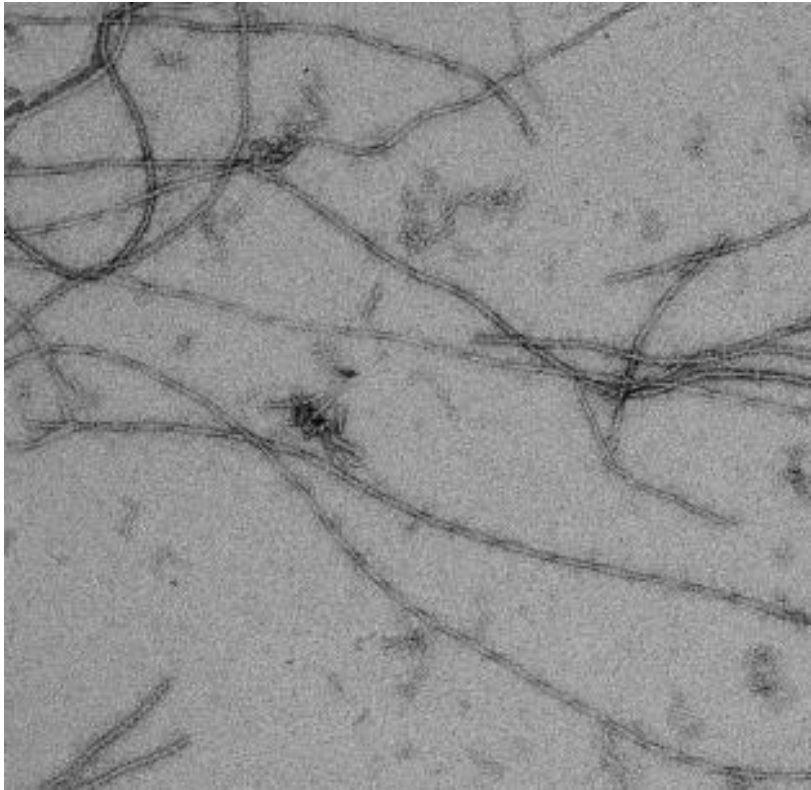
[northdakota@backcountryhunters.org](mailto:northdakota@backcountryhunters.org)



# Non-infectious vs infectious Prions

No human or animal has ever recovered from, or survived, a prion disease. Ever.

**Non-infectious Cellular Prion Protein (Required for prion infection) converted by infectious proteins.**

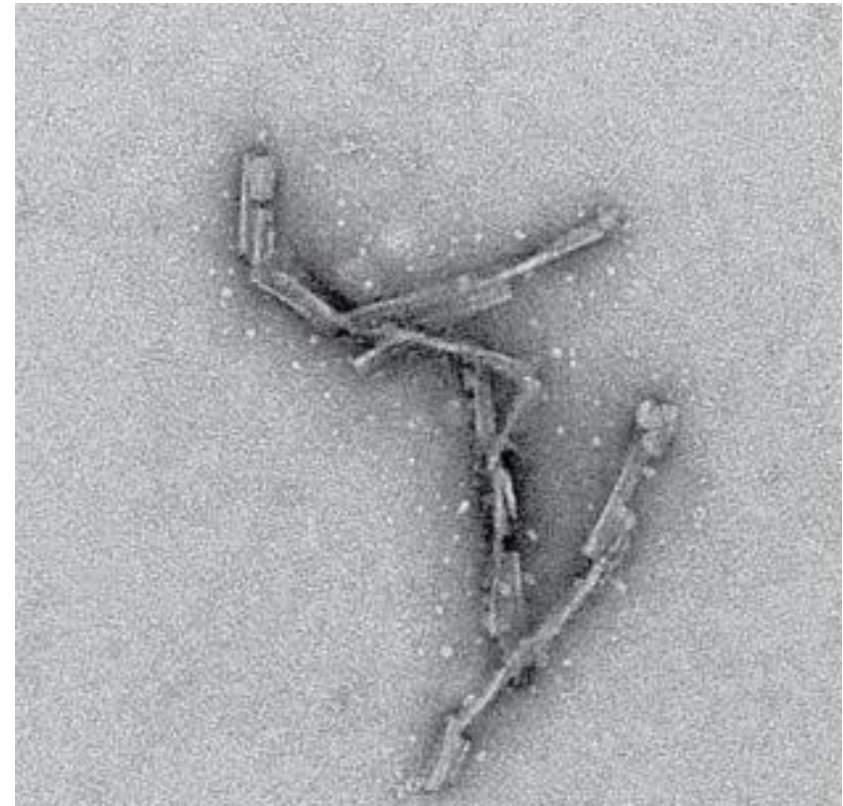


[Case Western Formal Paper](#) click link

[Case Western Atomic imaging of Prion](#) click link

[Non-infectious vs Infectious Protein](#) Click link

## Infectious Prion Protein



## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Doe
- Captured on 1/09/2017, 6 ½ years at capture
- CWD- at capture
- 165 lbs at capture, body condition score 5/10
- Recaptured on 2/04/2019
- CWD+ at recapture
- 164 lbs at capture, body condition score 7/10
- Died on 3/25/2019
- 90 lbs at death
- Lost 74lb, 45% body weight in 49 days
- 1.5 lbs per day
- CWD+ at death
- Lab necropsy
  - Severe emaciation, pneumonia



## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Doe
- Captured on 2/27/2017
- CWD+ at capture
- Est. 170 lbs at capture, body condition score 7/10
- Died on 5/29/2017
- Fell down hill
- 4 years of age at death
- 106 lbs at death
- Lab necropsy
  - Severe emaciation, pneumonia
  - Mummified fetus



## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Doe
- Collared 12/28/2017 ~3 ½ years of age
- CWD negative at capture
- 118 lbs at capture, body condition score of 0/10
- Died 02/14/2018
- CWD-positive at death
- Lab necropsy:
  - Severe emaciation
  - “The rumen contains a large amount of feed material...”
  - “Severe emaciation with adequate feed intake.”
- 78 lbs at death
- Loss of 40 lbs, ~33% body weight



- Doe
- Captured on 3/13/2017
- CWD+ at capture
- Died on 8/12/2017
- Carcass consumed

#### Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project



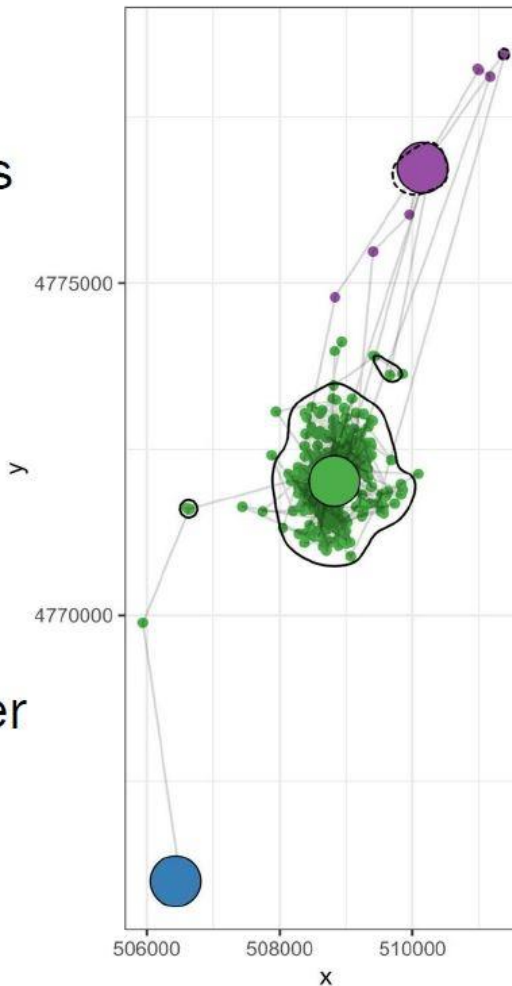
## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Doe
- Collared 12/19/2019 as ~20 months old
- 129 lbs at capture, body condition score of 10/10
- CWD-negative at capture
- Died 7/06/2022
- 50 yards from house; Landowner saw “extremely skinny and sick looking” days prior to death
- 76 lbs at death
- 53 lb, 41% loss
- CWD-positive at death
- Lab necropsy:
  - Severe emaciation
  - Mild pneumonia



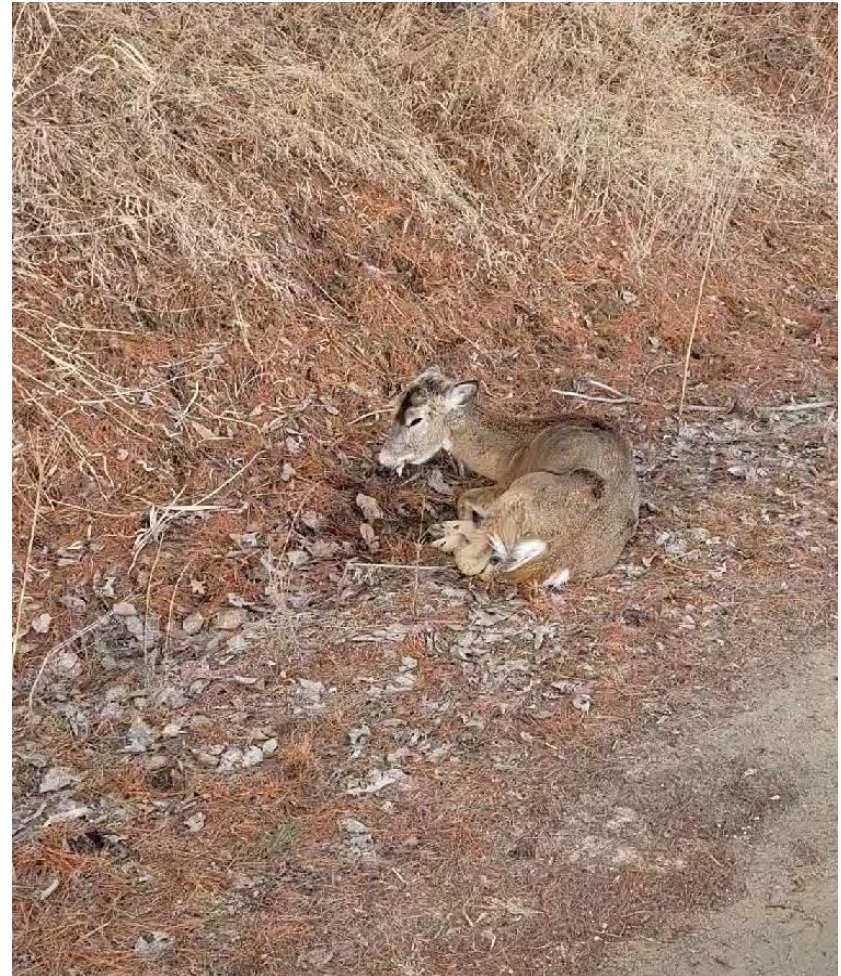
## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Born spring 2018
- Collared January 2020 as ~20 months old (20mo age class)
- CWD-positive at capture
- Died 9/29/2020
- Emaciated
- CWD-positive at death
- No necropsy as landowner did not want carcass removed





Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project –  
CWD positive doe



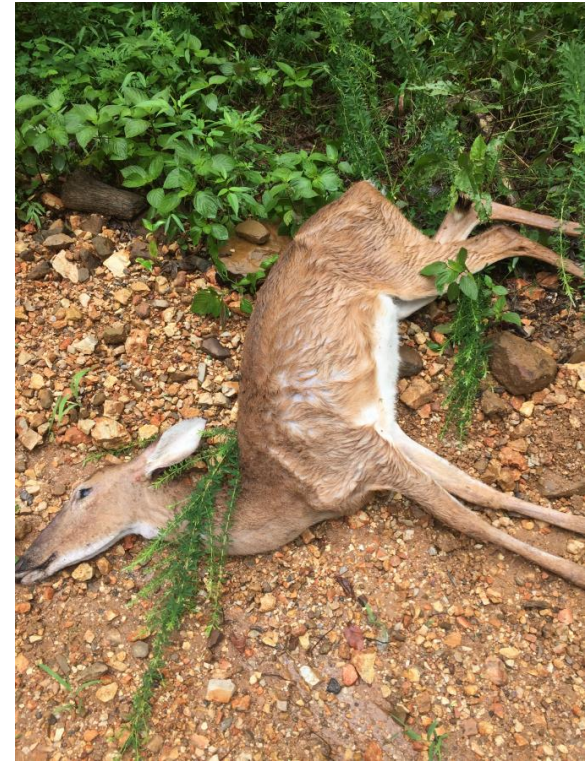
Hunter reported end stage white tailed deer



Arkansas end stage 2 yr old  
elk



Arkansas end stage doe



Arkansas end stage doe

# Arkansas Research – GPS Collared Deer

"34% of positive animals dying of no other cause other than late stage CWD."

-Dr. Jenn Ballard, Arkansas Veterinarian

## Survival



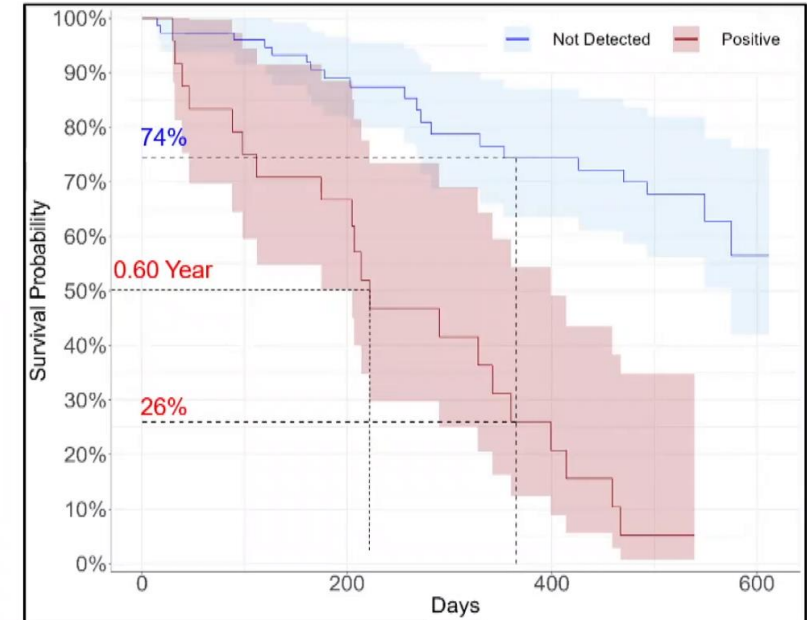
## CWD-Cause-Specific



CWD	Coyote	Bobcat	Bear	Harvest	CWD	Disease	Abnormal	Other
Positive	13%	7%	0%	24%	34%	4%	10%	7%
Not Detected	28%	10%	3%	28%	0%	10%	0%	21%

= 100%

= 100%

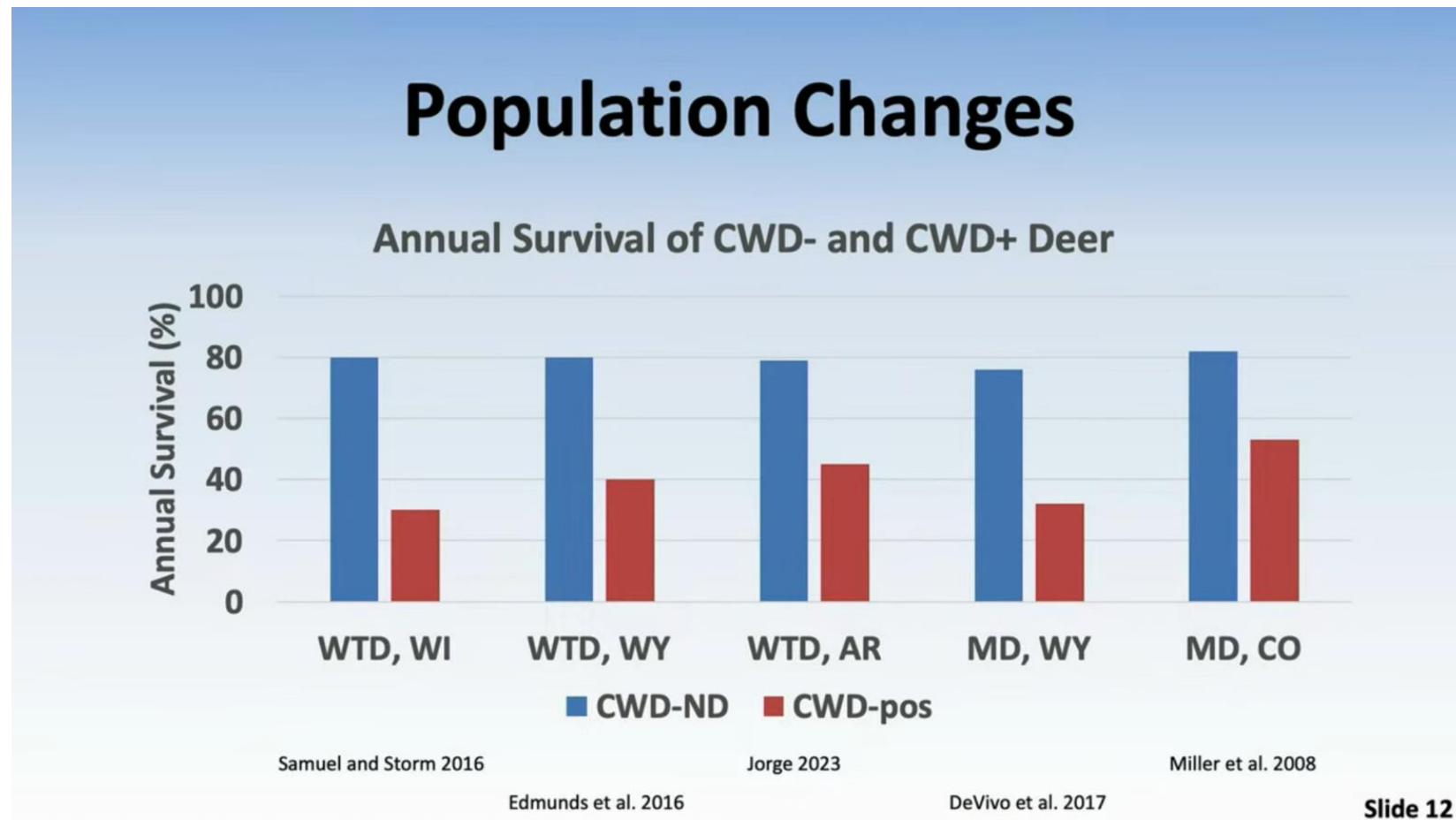


**At 1 year, positive animals are half as likely to be alive, with a 26% chance of survival.**

**By 500 days, ~5% chance of survival for positive animals vs negative animals at ~70%**

# Population impacts

Negative impacts to populations at high prevalence.... **ALWAYS!**



## Wyoming Outfitter gives up on Deer outfitting due to CWD



Riverton-area outfitter Ken Metzler in September 2022. (Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile)

"Based on hunter observation, landowner observation and [Game and Fish] personnel observation," Gregory said, "we're not seeing the deer that we used to."

Ken Metzler had a front-row seat to the crash. When [WyoFile first discussed CWD's impacts with the Riverton-area outfitter in late 2021](#), he estimated that his deer hunting operation had fallen off by 80%. Virtually every animal his paid hunters killed on leased agricultural hunting grounds — 98%, he estimated — tested positive for the disease.

Nearly three years later, Metzler reported that he's given up on his commercial deer hunting operation altogether.

"We're pretty well shut down," he said. "I'm not booking any deer hunters. I can't promise something that isn't there."

The 67-year-old outfitter has witnessed the Project Herd cycle in the past, and he retains some hope that it'll bounce back.

"It's getting worse right now, but it'll turn around a little bit," Metzler said. "If it comes back, it comes back — but it's not looking too good right now, that's for sure."

# Wyoming Outfitter gives up on Deer outfitting because of CWD

## cont...

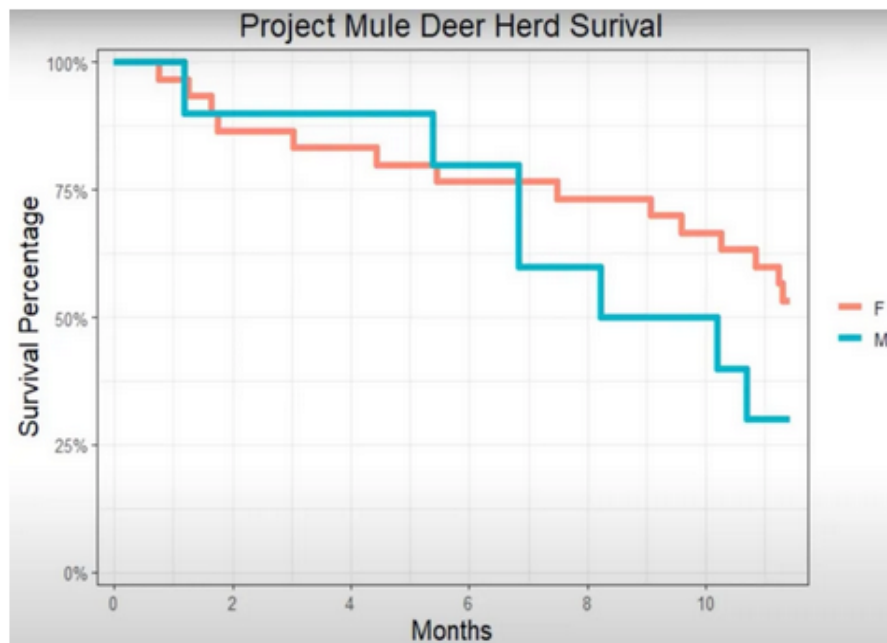
horrendous rates that threaten to wipe out the herd. Typically, adult doe mule deer have about an 85% chance of surviving any given year. In the Project Herd, however, **only half of the first cohort of 30 GPS-collared does lived through their first 12 months as a research deer. The bucks, more prone to CWD, fared worse. Three out of the 10 tracked males were still breathing after one year, but by the time WyoFile rendezvoused with Russell some 15 months into the study, 90% were dead. A single buck remained.**

### At 12 months

15 out of 30 does dead from  
3 out of 10 collared bucks dead

### At 15 months

9 out of 10 bucks dead



(Wyoming Game and Fish Department)

# Infectious Prions in the Saliva and Blood of Deer with Chronic Wasting Disease

Article in Science - November 2006  
DOI: 10.1126/science.1132661 - Source: PubMed

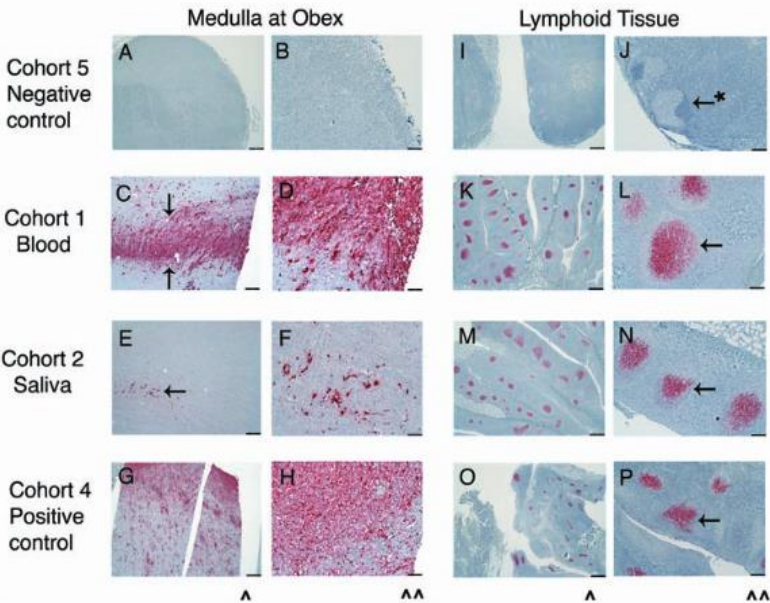
## Prions in Saliva

Animal cohort	n	Inoculum	Route (n)	Amount	No. of inoculations
1	3	Blood	IV (1), IP (2)	250 ml	1
2	3	Saliva	PO (3)	50 ml	3
3	3	Urine and feces	PO (3)	50 ml + 50 g	3 to 14
4	4	Brain	IC (2), PO (2)	1 g (IC), 10 g (PO)	1 (IC), 3 (PO)
5	2	All of the above	PO (2)	All of the above	1 to 14

**Table 2.** PrP<sup>CWD</sup> detection by longitudinal tonsil biopsy and necropsy of deer exposed to body fluids or excreta from CWD+ deer. PrP<sup>CWD</sup> assay results for tonsil (T), brain (B) (medulla oblongata at obex), and retropharyngeal lymph node (RLN) are shown. The number of deer in which PrP<sup>CWD</sup> was detected (8) is shown over the total number of deer in the cohort. One of the three original animals inoculated with urine and feces was euthanized prematurely 61 days pi due to a bacterial infection. The deer in cohorts 1, 2, and 3 were terminated at 18 months (mo.) pi. Two of the four cohort 4 deer were terminated at 20 and 21 months pi. The two cohort 5 deer were terminated at 22 months pi.

Animal cohort	Inoculum	Biopsy collection					
		3 mo. (T)	6 mo. (T)	12 mo. (T)	Termination		
					T	B	RLN
1	Blood	0/3	0/3	2/3	3/3	2/3	3/3
2	Saliva	0/3	0/3	2/3	3/3	2/3	3/3
3	Urine and feces	0/2	0/2	0/2	0/2	0/2	0/2
4	Brain	1/4	2/4	4/4	2/2	2/2	2/2
5	Negative samples	0/2	0/2	0/2	0/2	0/2	0/2

**Table 1.** CWD prion bioassay inoculation cohorts. Cohort 1 fawns received either a single intraperitoneal (IP) inoculation of 250 ml of frozen citrated blood (n = 2) or an intravenous (IV) transfusion with 250 ml fresh citrated whole blood (n = 1) each from a single CWD+ donor. Cohort 2 fawns received a total of 50 ml saliva, each from a different CWD+ donor, orally (PO) in three doses over a 3-day period. Cohort 3 fawns received a total of 50 ml urine and 50 g of feces PO, each from a different CWD+ donor, in divided doses over a 3- to 14-day period. As positive controls, cohort 4 fawns were inoculated with a 10% brain homogenate from a CWD+ donor deer through either a single intracranial (IC) injection of 1 g equivalent of brain (n = 2) or PO with a total of 10 g equivalents of brain (n = 2) divided over a 3-day period. Cohort 5 fawns (n = 2) were inoculated with equivalent amounts of each of the above materials from a single CWD-negative donor deer to serve as negative controls for the study.



**Fig. 1.** PrP<sup>CWD</sup> demonstrated by immunohistochemistry in tonsil, brain (medulla oblongata at obex), and retropharyngeal lymph node of deer receiving saliva or blood from CWD-infected donors. CWD immunohistochemistry is shown in the medulla at obex (A to H) and either tonsil or retropharyngeal lymph node (I to P) (8). Arrows indicate PrP<sup>CWD</sup> staining (red) within brain and lymphoid follicles. Arrow with asterisk indicates lymphoid follicle negative for PrP<sup>CWD</sup>. ^, scale bar = 550 μm; ^^, scale bar = 110 μm.

# Very low oral exposure to prions of brain or saliva origin can transmit chronic wasting disease

Nathaniel D. Denkers<sup>1</sup>, Clare E. Hoover<sup>2</sup>, Kristen A. Davenport<sup>3</sup>, Davin M. Henderson<sup>1</sup>, Erin E. McNulty<sup>1</sup>, Amy V. Nalls<sup>1</sup>, Candace K. Mathiason<sup>1</sup>, Edward A. Hoover<sup>1\*</sup>

**Dosage Dependent  
Prolonged and  
repeated Exposure  
to infect deer**

- **Study done on white-tailed deer**

- **Cohort 4,5,6 – Saliva inocula**

- **Cohort 4 – 3 X 10ml** dose of Saliva from a Positive Animals
  - Approx. 1 shot glass divided into 3 doses
- **Cohort 5 – 10 X 1.65 ml** doses of saliva
  - ½ Shot glass divided into 10 doses
- **Cohort 6 – One concentrated 16.5 ml** dose
- **Cohort 7 – Negative control** (Negative brain or saliva)

Cohort 4 (n = 4): 300 ng brain pool equivalent saliva (SP1+), administered as 3, 100 ng doses in 3 consecutive weeks. Each dose was contained in 10 ml of pooled saliva (total dose = 300 ng contained in 30 ml).

Cohort 5 (n = 4): 300 ng brain pool equivalent saliva (SP2+), administered as 10, 30 ng doses over 12 weeks. 30 ng doses were given once a week for 5 consecutive weeks, followed by a 4-week interval to ensure anesthesia safety, then resumed as weekly 30 ng doses for 5 consecutive weeks. Each dose was contained in 1.65 ml of pooled saliva (total dose = 300 ng contained in 16.5 ml).

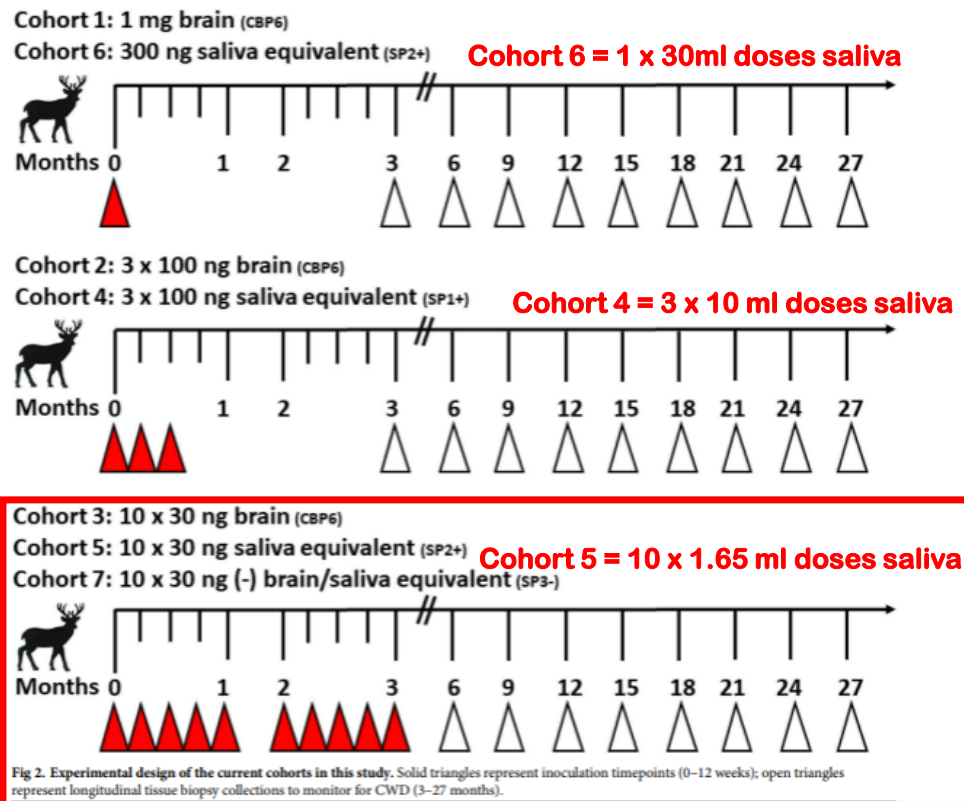
Cohort 6 (n = 4): 300 ng brain pool equivalent saliva (SP2+), administered as a single 16.5 ml dose (total dose = 300 ng contained in 16.5 ml)

Cohort 7 (n = 2): 300 ng CWD-negative brain and 300 ng CWD-negative saliva, administered together as 10, 60 ng doses (30 ng each) over 12 weeks. 60 ng doses were given once a week for 5 consecutive weeks, followed by a 4-week interval to ensure anesthesia safety, then resumed as weekly 60 ng doses for 5 consecutive weeks. Each dose contained 30 ng CWD-negative brain contained in 3 ml - 1XPBS and 30 ng negative saliva contained in 1.65 ml (total dose = 600 ng contained in 46.5 ml).

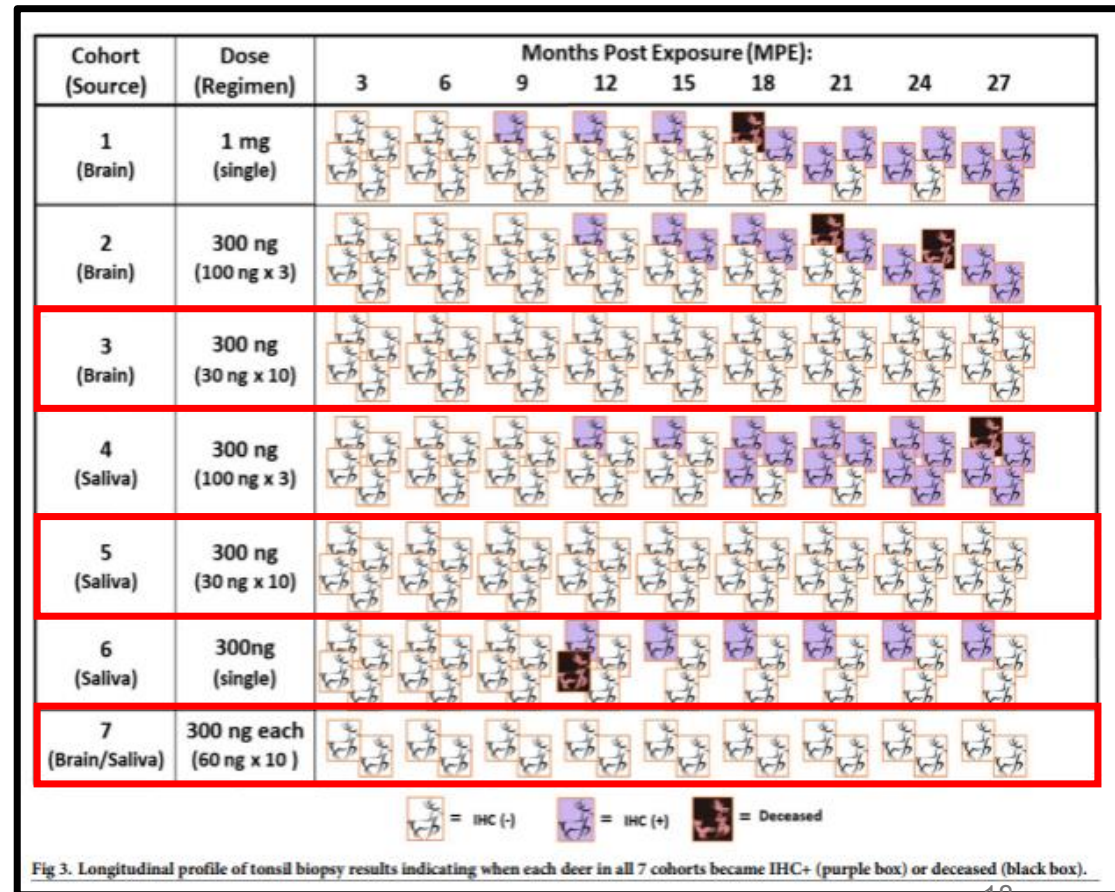
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**Dosage Dependent  
Prolonged and repeated  
Exposure to infect deer**



**Cohort 3,5,7 small doses - All remain negative**

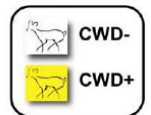


# Infectious Prions in Pre-Clinical Deer and Transmission of Chronic Wasting Disease Solely by Environmental Exposure

Candace K. Mathiason<sup>1</sup>, Sheila A. Hays<sup>1</sup>, Jenny Powers<sup>2</sup>, Jeanette Hayes-Klug<sup>1</sup>, Julia Langenberg<sup>3</sup>, Sallie J. Dahmes<sup>4</sup>, David A. Osborn<sup>5</sup>, Karl V. Miller<sup>5</sup>, Robert J. Warren<sup>5</sup>, Gary L. Mason<sup>1</sup>, Edward A. Hoover<sup>1\*</sup>

**Saliva (cohort 2).** Each of the 3 deer in this cohort received saliva from pre-clinical CWD+ donors that were 6 to 13 months pi (Tables 1, 2). PrP<sup>CWD</sup> was detected in tonsil of 1 of the 3 inoculated deer at 12 months pi, but not at earlier time points. By 19 months pi, study termination, a second animal was CWD+, by detection of PrP<sup>CWD</sup> in brain and lymphoid tissue. The remaining deer was of necessity terminated at 16 months pi due to unmanageable aggressive behavior. This animal was CWD negative as determined by extensive western blot and IHC analysis (Figs. 1, 2).

**Environmental exposure (cohort 4).** The two animals in this cohort were exposed to daily introductions of feed buckets, water, and bedding removed from pens housing deer transitioning from pre-clinical to clinical phases of the disease (Table 1, 2). One of 2 exposed deer became tonsil biopsy PrP<sup>CWD</sup>-positive at 15 months pi. At study termination, 19 months pi, both animals were CWD+ (Figs. 1, 2).



**Table 1.** CWD bioassay inoculation cohorts.

Animal cohort	n	Inoculum	Route of inoculation	Dosage (total volume)	No. of inoculations
1	3	Whole blood	IV	1 (225 ml)	1
2	3	Saliva	PO	10 ml/day for 5 days (50 ml)	5
3	3	Urine and Feces	PO	90 daily doses (85 ml+112.5 gr)	90
4	2	Environmental contact <sup>a</sup>	PO	19 mos. continuous exposure	Refreshed daily for 570 days (19 mos.)
5	4	Brain	PO	1 gr/day for 5 days (5 gr)	5

<sup>a</sup>Water, feed buckets and bedding from CWD+ deer suites.  
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0005916.t001

Cohort	3 mo.	6 mo.	T <sup>a</sup> 12 mo.	T <sup>a</sup> B <sup>b</sup> RLN <sup>b</sup> Terminal <sup>b</sup>	n+/ total n
Blood (cohort 1)	0/3	0/3	2/3	3/3	3/3
Saliva (cohort 2)	0/3	0/3	1/3	2/3	2/3
Urine/Feces (cohort 3)	0/3	0/3	0/3	0/3	0/3
Environment only (cohort 4)	0/2	0/2	0/2	2/2	2/2
Pos. control (cohort 5)	0/4	2/4	4/4	4/4	4/4

T<sup>a</sup>=tonsil, B<sup>b</sup>=Brain at obex, RLN<sup>b</sup>=Retropharyngeal lymph node, <sup>b</sup>= euthanasia dependent upon clinical disease progression or space availability, X= animal euthanized for reason other than CWD.

# Infectious Prions in Pre-Clinical Deer and Transmission of Chronic Wasting Disease Solely by Environmental Exposure (cont.)

In summary, the results reported here reconfirm that blood and saliva are sources of infectious CWD prions, consistent with previous findings [27], and further support a mechanism for efficient CWD transmission in nature. We also show that infectious prions shed into the environment by CWD+ deer are sufficient to transmit the disease to naïve deer in the absence of direct animal-to-animal contact. These observations reinforce the exposure risk associated with body fluids, excreta, and all tissues from CWD+ cervids and suggest that similar dynamics may exist in other prion infections.

## Environmental sources of CWD infection

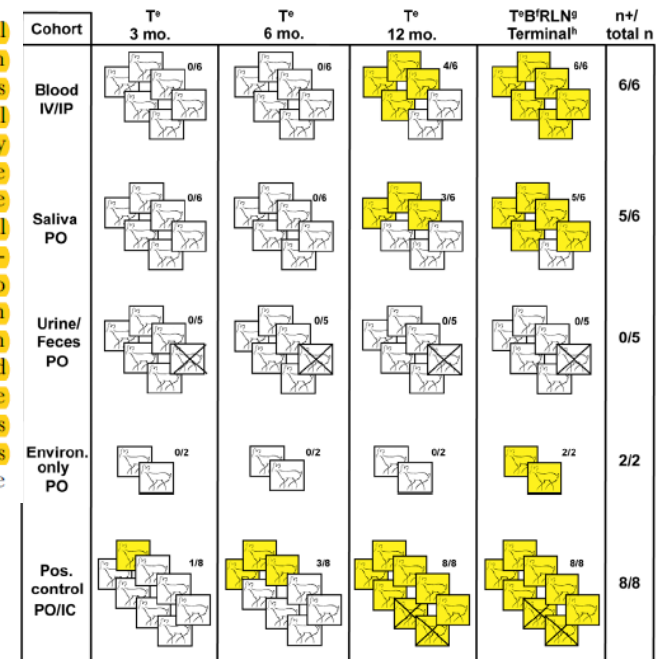
Previous studies have confirmed direct animal-to-animal contact—horizontal transmission—as an efficient mode for prion disease transmission [9,66]. Moreover, Miller and colleagues [9,67,68] have provided substantial evidence for environmental contamination as a source of CWD infection. Our bioassay study inocula doses (50 ml saliva/deer), while efficient in establishing the infectious nature of saliva, are likely unrealistic doses to be acquired in a natural setting. To emulate a more feasible natural environment-associated dose, while negating direct animal-to-animal contact, we exposed naïve deer to repeated exposures to fomites from the suites of CWD-infected deer. The study design was meant to mirror the daily habits and movements of a deer in its natural setting in which it may return to an area contaminated with small amounts of infectious prions over time. Here we provide the first report that under controlled indoor conditions CWD-naïve deer can acquire infection by exposure to fomites from the environment of CWD-infected deer, supporting the

two years. The presence of infectious CWD prions in the environment therefore strongly suggests that natural prion infection occurs by routes additional to direct animal-to-animal contact. Based on the present and our previous findings [27], we speculate that saliva may harbor the greatest concentration of CWD prions available for horizontal transmission and environmental contamination, but recognize that other routes of excretion at lower concentration and greater volume still remain plausible.

**Prolonged and repeated exposure to infect deer**

**Deer are not becoming positive in brief or short term encounters**

**This is why bait piles are high risk. Daily exposure = prolonged and repeated exposure**



T<sup>a</sup>=tonsil, B<sup>b</sup>=Brain at obex, RLN<sup>c</sup>=Retropharyngeal lymph node, <sup>d</sup>= euthanasia dependent upon clinical disease progression or space availability, X= animal euthanized for reason other than CWD.

Figure 4. Summary of naïve deer exposed to inoculum from CWD+ deer—combined with our previous published findings [27]. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0005916.g004

# Environmental Sources of Prion Transmission in Mule Deer

Michael W. Miller,\* Elizabeth S. Williams,† N. Thompson Hobbs,‡ and Lisa L. Wolfe\*

## Materials and Methods

We conducted a replicated experiment to compare CWD transmission from three infection sources: naturally infected captive mule deer (one infected deer/paddock), carcasses from naturally infected captive mule deer that had decomposed in situ  $\approx 1.8$  years earlier (one carcass/paddock), or undisturbed paddock environments where infected mule deer had last resided 2.2 years earlier. Each exposure source was replicated in three separate paddocks; two clean paddocks served as unexposed controls. Control paddocks and paddocks where live infected deer were

**Prolonged and repeated exposure to infect deer**

**Deer are not becoming positive in brief or short term encounters**

**This is why bait piles are high risk. Daily exposure = prolonged and repeated exposure**

Table. Chronic wasting disease arising in mule deer exposed to environments contaminated by residual excreta, carcasses, or other infected deer

Replicate	Exposure source			
	Infected deer	Infected carcass	Residual excreta	Unexposed
1	1/4 <sup>a</sup>	0/3	1/3	0/2
2	0/2	2/4	0/3	0/2
3	1/4	1/5	0/3	NA <sup>b</sup>
Total	2/10	3/12	1/9	0/4

<sup>a</sup>Number positive/number exposed (not including infected source deer).

<sup>b</sup>Not applicable; controls included only two replicate paddocks.

**1 year of exposure minimal positive animals**

## Chronic wasting disease model of genetic selection favoring prolonged survival in Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus elaphus*)

A. L. WILLIAMS,<sup>1,†</sup> T. J. KREEGER,<sup>2,3</sup> AND B. A. SCHUMAKER<sup>1</sup>

**NO animals were artificially inoculated.**

**No injections, no transfusions, no brain homogenate, no forced saliva intake.**

**Prolonged eating and drinking out of the same containers that CWD+ elk did.**

CWD inoculation studies have been conducted there. The TWWRU has eight, 0.2-ha elk holding pens, all of which held CWD-infected elk previous to and during this study. Elk were rotated randomly among all eight pens annually to maximize PrP<sup>CWD</sup> exposure, but were never intermingled with non-study, CWD-infected elk. Captive elk were fed alfalfa hay supplemented with a pelleted ration and provided water and a trace mineral block ad libitum. Husbandry, care, diagnostic techniques, and method of euthanasia

annually for PrP by rectal mucosa biopsy using ELISA (Spraker et al. 2009). During the analysis, 37 of 39 elk died, all of which were positive for CWD. Of those that had been examined for PrP<sup>CWD</sup> by rectal mucosa biopsy,

all elk were 27 M/M<sub>132</sub> (69.2%), 11 M/L<sub>132</sub> (28.2%), and 1 L/L<sub>132</sub> (2.6%). The genotypes of the last surviving elk were M/L<sub>132</sub> (which died in 2012) and L/L<sub>132</sub>. In 2014, the L/L<sub>132</sub> is still alive and has remained negative for PrP<sup>CWD</sup> by rectal

The previously cited infectivity and dosage research clearly shows its **large unnatural doses OR prolonged and repeated exposure** that make animals positive. Deer aren't becoming positive from brief encounters or single small exposures.

Winter herding is temporary, baiting and the incentive to hunt over bait, leads to year round bait sites that bring deer into contact with those same exact sites every day, sometimes multiple times a day.

**Prolonged and Repeated exposure.**

The more infected deer using a bait site, the larger the accumulation of prions at the site will be and the larger the contact dose will become.

# Winter Herding

We CAN stop this....



We can't stop this...but they are obviously not the same.



This is not the same...



As this...



or this...



Deer defecating within a foot of bait block buried in the snow

# RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Mineral licks as environmental reservoirs of chronic wasting disease prions

Ian H. Plummer<sup>1</sup>, Chad J. Johnson<sup>2</sup>, Alexandra R. Chesney<sup>3</sup>, Joel A. Pedersen<sup>4\*</sup>, Michael D. Samuel<sup>1\*</sup>

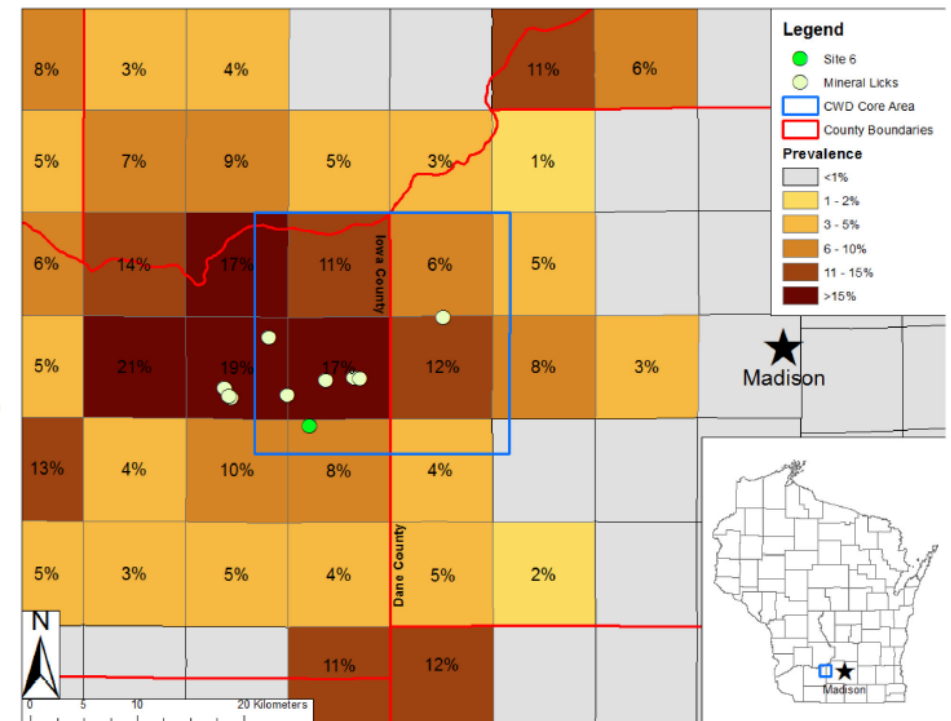
Here, we test the hypothesis that mineral licks used by deer harbor CWD prions, thus serving as potential environmental reservoirs for these infectious agents. During 2012–2015 we collected soil and water samples from 11 mineral licks (10 man-made and one natural) frequented by free-ranging white-tailed deer in a large CWD enzootic zone west of Madison, Wisconsin, USA [6] (Fig 2). We adapted a 96-well microplate variant of PMCA that

likely due in part to co-extracted inhibitors of the PMCA reaction and incomplete extraction from soil particles. The detection of prions at 9 of 11 sites sampled, however, demonstrates widespread contamination of mineral licks in the CWD outbreak zone. The generally higher detection of CWD prions in environmental samples collected from soil indicates amplification by the PMCA.

At the mineral lick site with the highest detection of CWD prions in environmental samples (Site 6), we opportunistically sampled white-tailed deer fecal pellets. We detected CWD prions in six of the 10 fecal samples after three rounds of amplification by mb-PMCA. Of eight

## Discussion

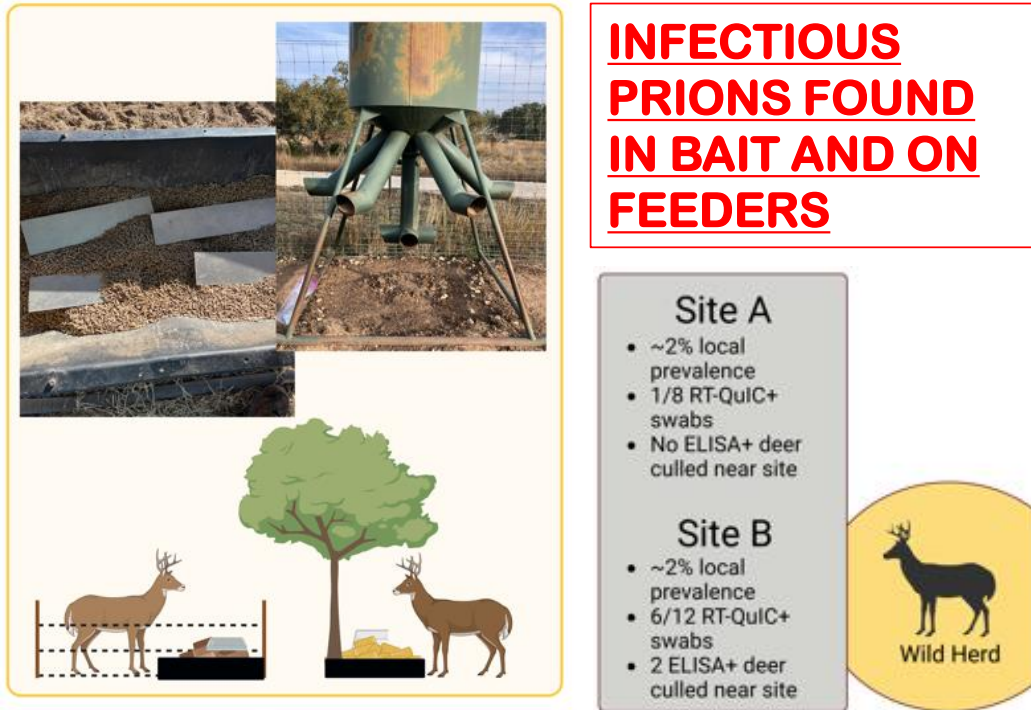
Our results demonstrate that CWD-infected white-tailed deer deposit prions at mineral licks they visit. Although the mechanism of prion deposition is unknown, we suspect deposition of saliva by infected deer during ingestion of soil and water at mineral licks has the highest potential to facilitate indirect transmission to susceptible deer. Saliva from white-tailed deer infected with CWD contains on the order of 1–5 infectious doses ( $ID_{50}$ ) per 10 mL as quantified by real-time quaking-induced conversion, where an  $ID_{50}$  is the dose of CWD prions capable of infecting half of the transgenic mice expressing cervid prion protein [48]. Frequent visitation by infected cervids could allow mineral licks to become potential “hot spots” for indirect trans-



**Fig 2. Mineral licks and chronic wasting disease prevalence.** Locations of sampled mineral licks and prevalence of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in hunter-harvested white-tailed deer from 2010–2013 in south-central Wisconsin, USA. Squares are townships of 9.66 km per side. Inset shows state of Wisconsin, USA. Site 6 denotes the mineral lick with CWD-positive fecal samples.

# CWD Sentinels: detecting environmental prion protein (ePrP) via surfaces for the early discovery of CWD

Marc D. Schwabenlander<sup>1</sup>, Catalina Picasso-Risso<sup>1</sup>, Gage Rowden<sup>1</sup>, Qi Yuan<sup>2</sup>, Erik Hildebrand<sup>3</sup>, Patrick Hagen<sup>3</sup>, Shannon L. Bartelt-Hunt<sup>4</sup>, Jason C. Bartz<sup>2</sup>, Tiffany M. Wolf<sup>5</sup>, and Peter A. Larsen<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1. A.** Sentinel surfaces placed for one week in captive deer facilities and areas with wild deer feeders/baits. **B.** Sentinels collected/swabbed. **C.** Swabs tested via RT-QuIC for CWD.

Laboratory controls of clean/unused surfaces and feed/bait components were analyzed via RT-QuIC (negative controls). Some locations had additional samples collected (e.g., water tank swabs, feeder swabs, oral swabs). Locations had variable levels of CWD prevalence.

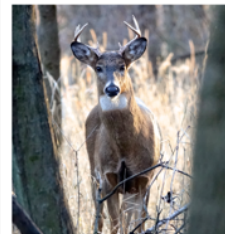
## INTRODUCTION

Scientists are developing highly sensitive chronic wasting disease (CWD) detection methodologies that utilize non-tissue samples.

Real-time quaking-induced conversion (RT-QuIC) is one such assay proven to be a more sensitive tool for CWD prion detection than current antibody-based methods (e.g., ELISA and IHC).

Similar to environmental DNA (eDNA) detection methods in aquatic and terrestrial environments, we investigated a rapid method for extracting prions from swabs of environmental surfaces to detect CWD when paired with RT-QuIC.

Laboratory investigation demonstrated that RT-QuIC detection of CWD prions recovered from surfaces (e.g., stainless steel, glass) via swabs was similar to the original CWD prion load applied to the surface.<sup>1</sup>

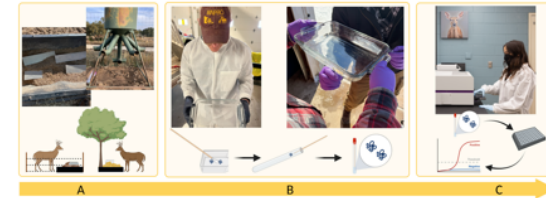


## AIM

We deployed surfaces shown to effectively bind misfolded prions as environmental prion protein (ePrP) sentinels in food sources of captive and free-ranging herds.



## METHODS

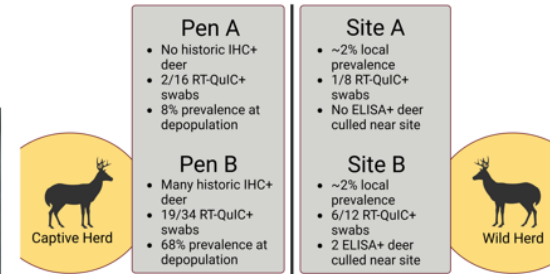


**Figure 1. A.** Sentinel surfaces placed for one week in captive deer facilities and areas with wild deer feeders/baits. **B.** Sentinels collected/swabbed. **C.** Swabs tested via RT-QuIC for CWD.

Laboratory controls of clean/unused surfaces and feed/bait components were analyzed via RT-QuIC (negative controls). Some locations had additional samples collected (e.g., water tank swabs, feeder swabs, oral swabs). Locations had variable levels of CWD prevalence.

All data are being analyzed for detection performance (e.g., run time, sample dilution) and association between environmental sample detection and CWD prevalence.

## RESULTS



**Figure 2.** Representative pens and sites demonstrating the preliminary assessment of the relationships between CWD results from sentinel swabs via RT-QuIC and associated deer tissues via ELISA and/or IHC.

## DISCUSSION

- Data collection and analysis are still in progress for all locations.
- Captive facility swab results have generally aligned with location/pen prevalence.
- Wild herd sentinel swab results and CWD positive culled deer near bait sites have been less clearly aligned, likely due to seasonal local migration patterns in the wild herd, potential for infected deer visiting multiple sites, and culling processes.
- Research indicates that low levels of prions are excreted in saliva from CWD positive deer.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, even with promising prion recovery based on the seminal laboratory swabbing method development<sup>1</sup>, it is likely in deer with early CWD infection, detection via sentinels may be limited. Additionally, deer may not test positive via IHC or ELISA on tissues but may be excreting prions in saliva at some level detectable via sentinel swabs.

## CONCLUSIONS

- ePrP detection through non-invasive methods may be used for surveillance and discovery of CWD, informing management.
- Surface sentinel surveillance may be an applicable practice for other prion and prion-like diseases in settings such as meat processing facilities and hospitals.
- Environmental factors, such as feed type, may affect results.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the facility owners and regulatory bodies for access to the research locations, collection of sentinels, and providing official CWD testing results. Figures 1 and 2 and this poster were created with BioRender.com.



## LITERATURE CITED

- Yuan Q, Rowden G, Wolf TM, Schwabenlander MD, Larsen PA, Bartelt-Hunt SL, Bartz JC. Sensitive detection of chronic wasting disease prions recovered from environmentally relevant surfaces. *Environment International*, Volume 166, 2022.
- Henderson DM, Manca M, Haley NJ, Denkers ND, Nalls AV, Mathiason CK, et al. (2013) Rapid Antemortem Detection of CWD Prions in Deer Saliva. *PLoS ONE* 8(9): e74377.

Alternative Food sources are highest incident rate for contact with other deer and environmental sites.

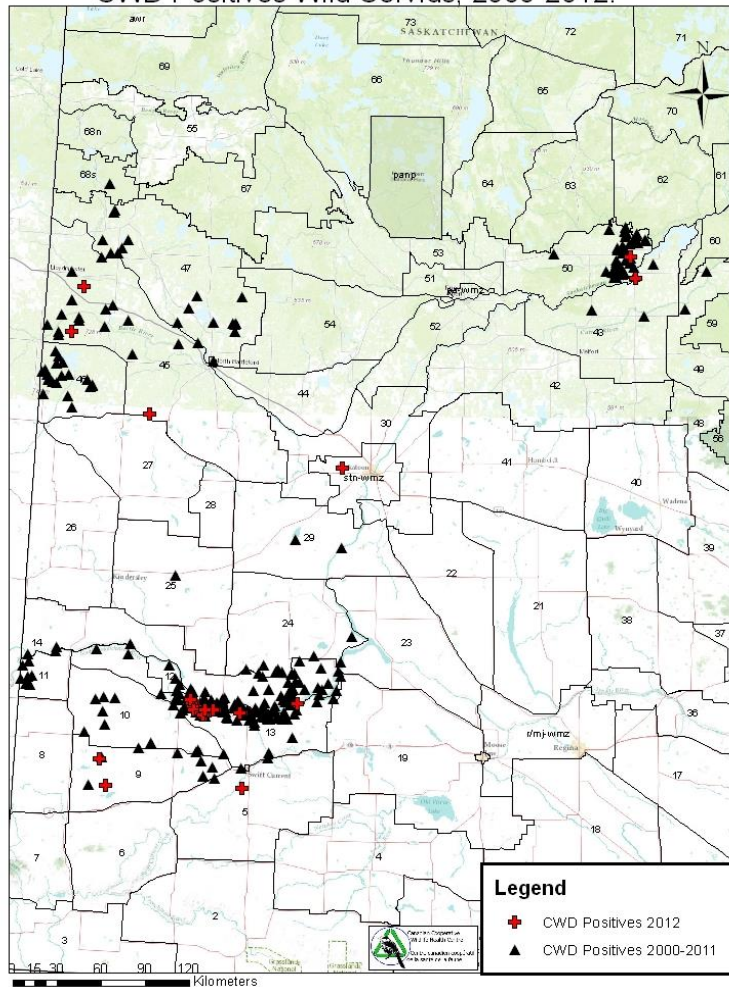
Even higher than natural winter herding.



# Saskatchewan vs North Dakota

Same number of years with disease

CWD Positives Wild Cervids, 2000-2012.



## Saskatchewan – 2000-2012

Did not follow best management practices (i.e. baiting bans)

**TOTAL CWD positives = 397**

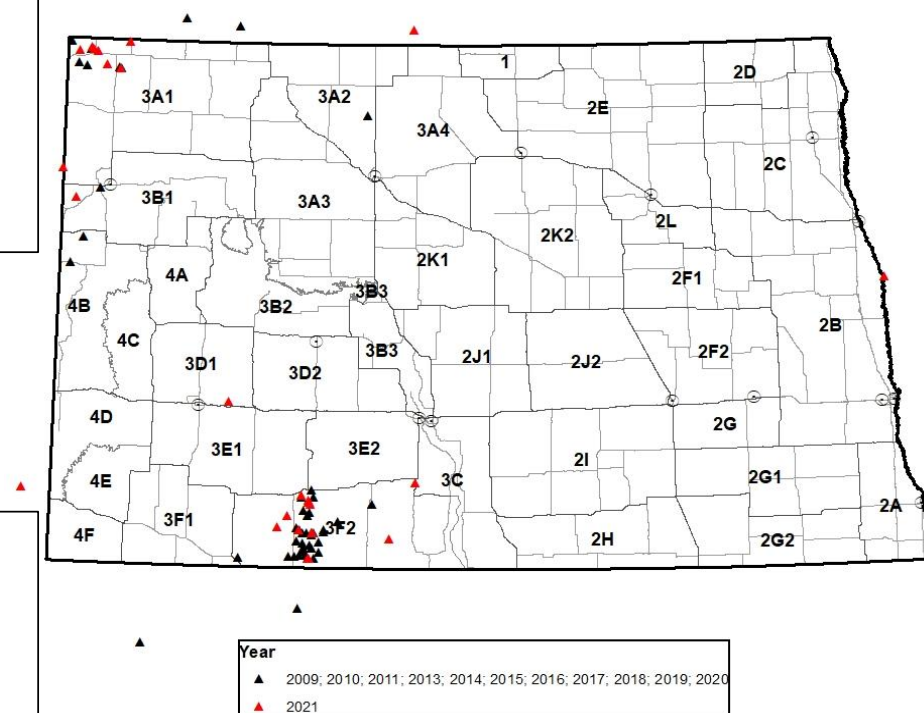
**Significantly more Geographic Spread with larger and denser hot spots**

## North Dakota – 2009-2021

Followed best management practices (i.e. baiting bans) and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on depredation measures

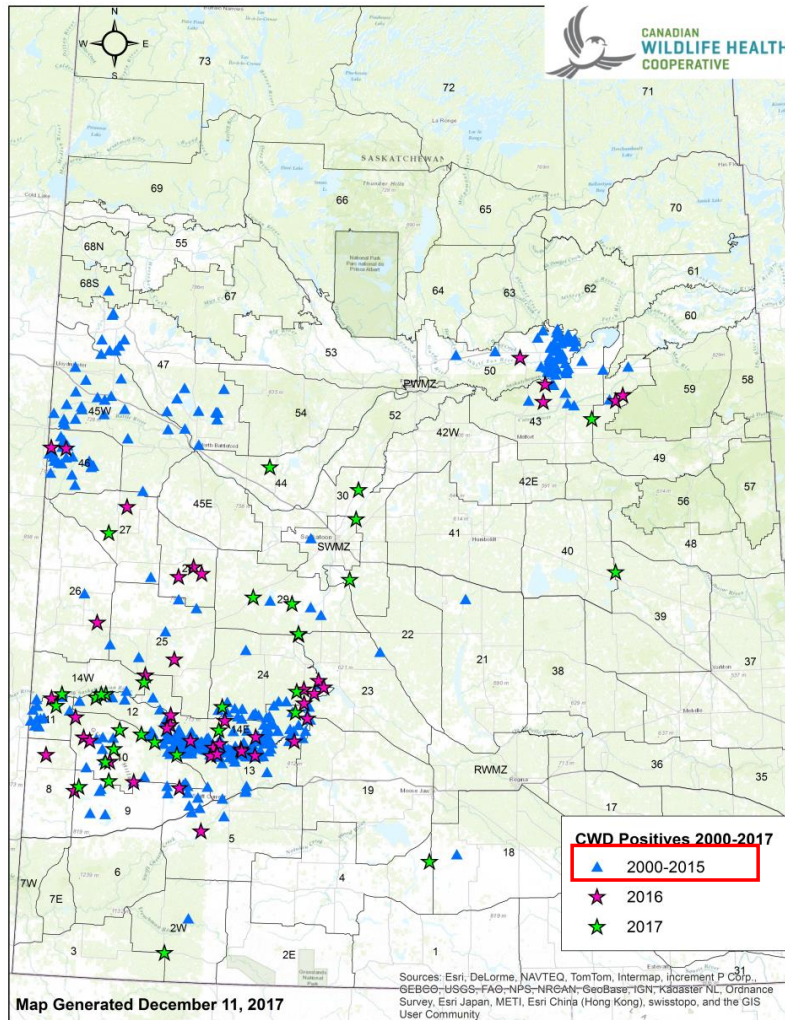
**TOTAL CWD positives = 70**

CWD Detections in North Dakota; 2009-2021



# Saskatchewan vs North Dakota

Same number of years with disease



Saskatchewan – 2000-2015

Did not follow best management practices (i.e. baiting bans)

TOTAL CWD positives = 458 even with multi-year gap in Surveillance funding (2010-2016)

145 miles of linear distance in Southern Saskatchewan outbreak

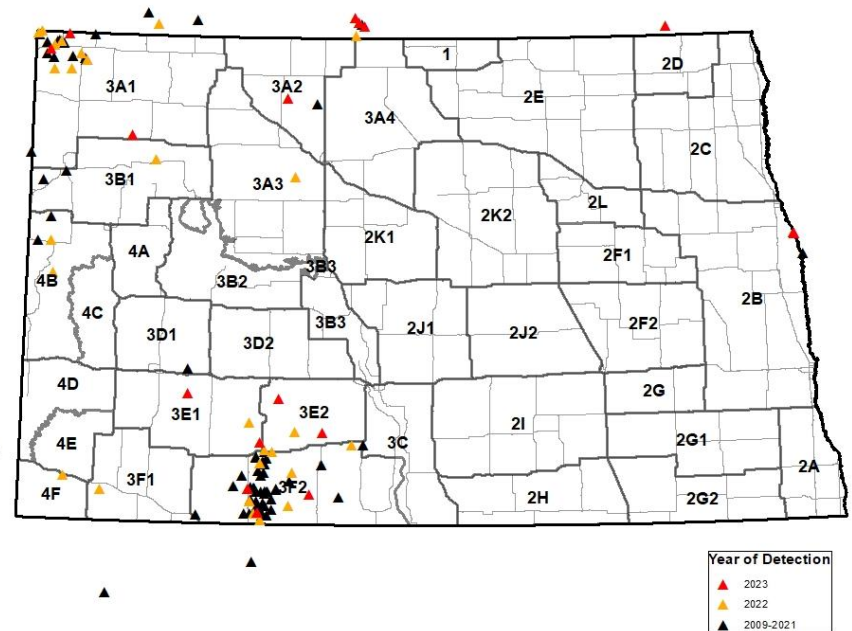
North Dakota – 2009-2023

Followed best management practices (i.e. baiting bans) and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on depredation measures

TOTAL CWD positives = 105

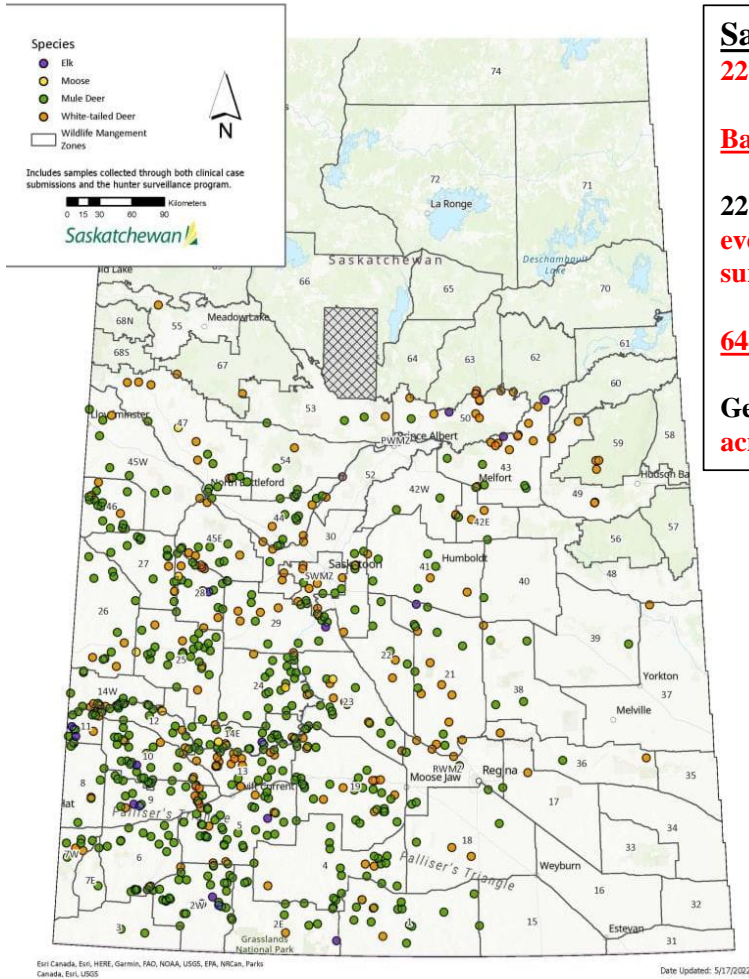
37 miles of linear distance in southern ND outbreak

CWD Detections in North Dakota; 2009-2023



# Saskatchewan vs South Dakota

## 2021-22 CWD Surveillance Program Positive Test Results



## **Saskatchewan – 2000 – 2021**

## 22 years with CWD

## Baiting is legal and widely popular

**22 yr TOTAL CWD positives = 2,599**  
**even with multi-year gap in**  
**surveillance**

**644 Positives just 2021/22 report**

**Geographic Spread over ~ 70 million acres (higher density across range)**

### South Dakota – 2001 - 2021

## 21 years with CWD

## No Baiting

**21 yr TOTAL CWD positives = 438 in wild deer**

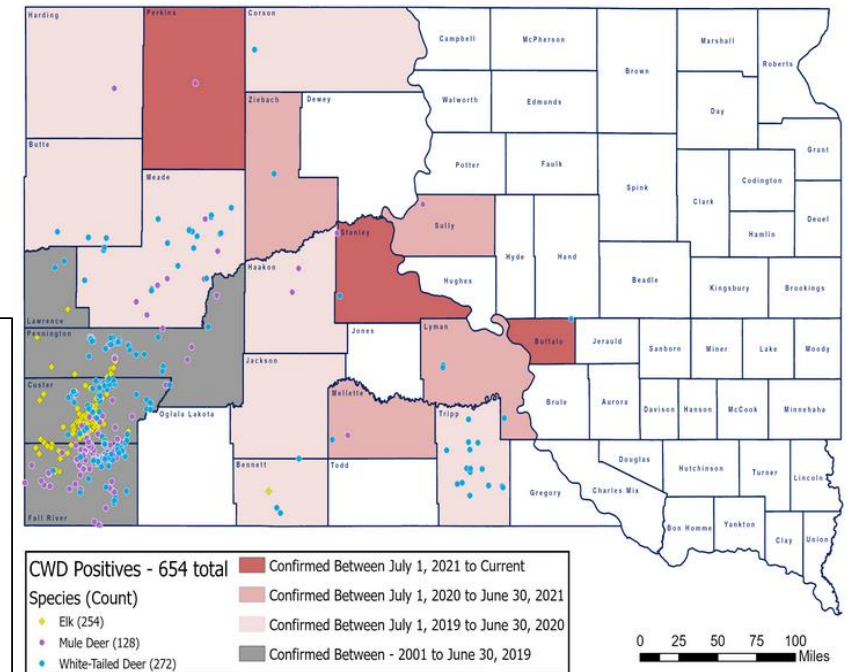
## 282 captive elk in Wind Cave NP

## 54 Positives just in 2021/22 report

**Confined to west half of the state ~ 23 million acres**

## Chronic Wasting Disease Positives in South Dakota

2001 - February 16, 2022

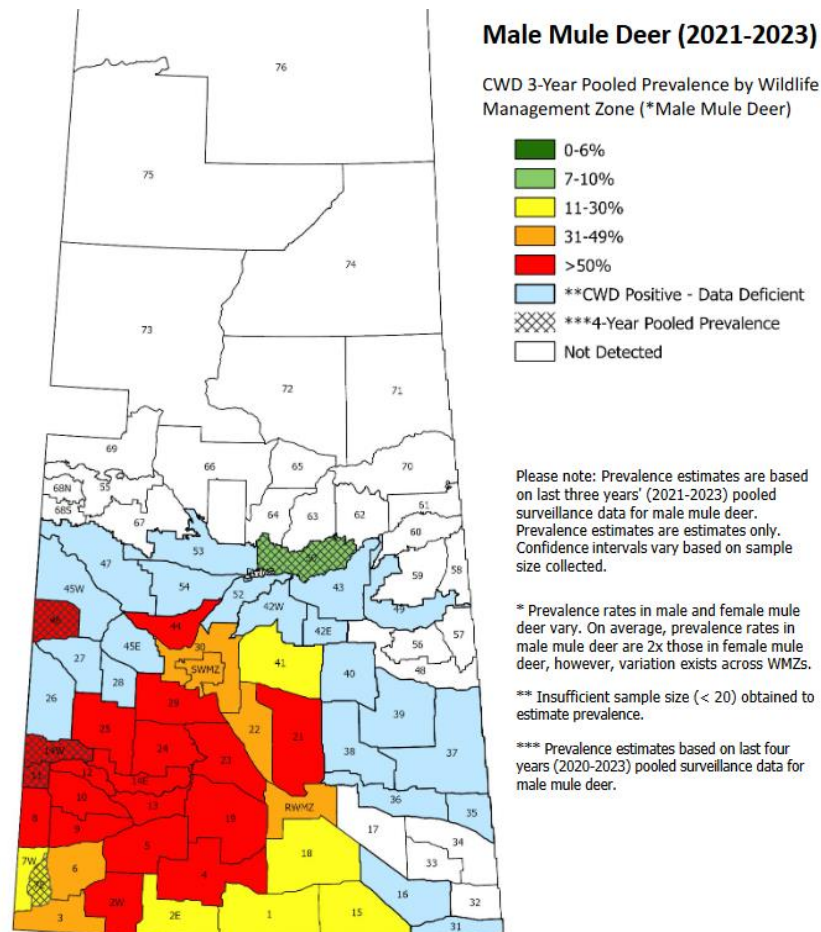


# Baiting in Saskatchewan vs no baiting in Wyoming

**Recent Prevalence Estimates after 24 years**

**~74.4 Million acres of geographic spread**

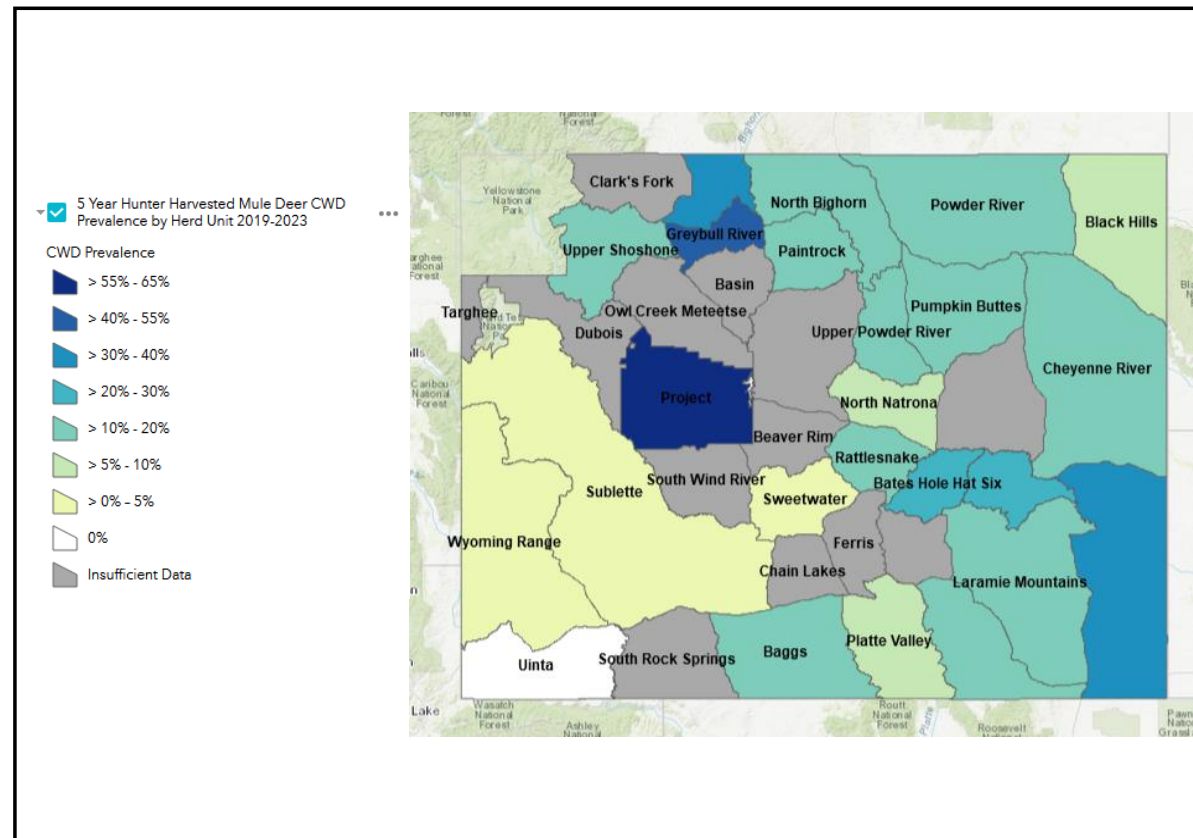
**18 units with over 75% prevalence**



**Recent Prevalence Estimates after 39 years with disease**

**~55.5 million acres of geographic spread**

**2 units over 50% prevalence**



# Saskatchewan vs Colorado Prevalence

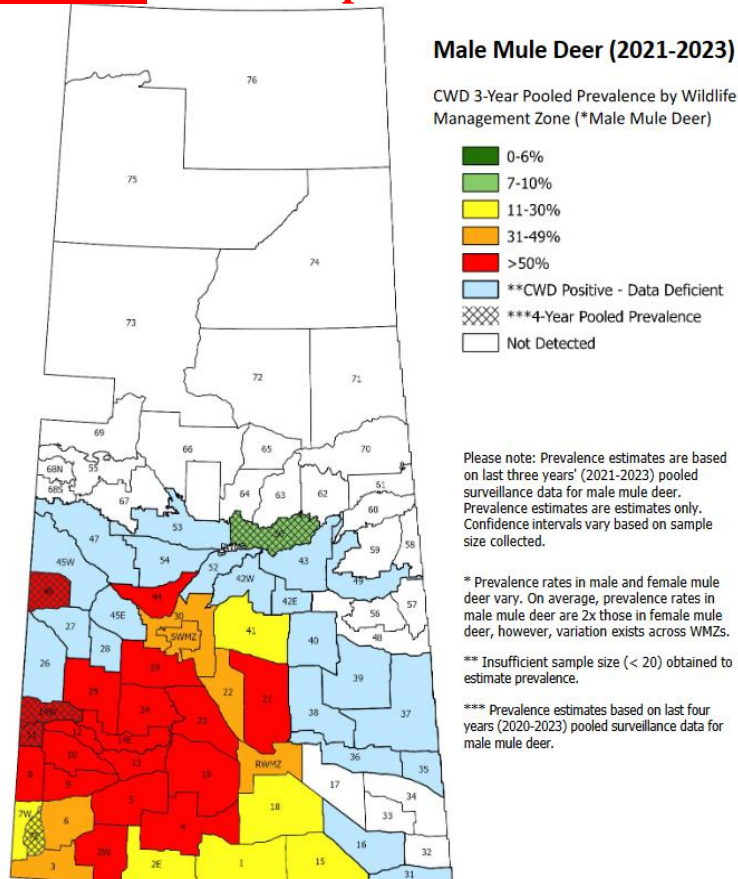
## Recent Prevalence Estimates after 24 years

First detection in the wild – 2000

Baiting has always been allowed

~74.4 Million acres of geographic spread

18 Units over 75% prevalence



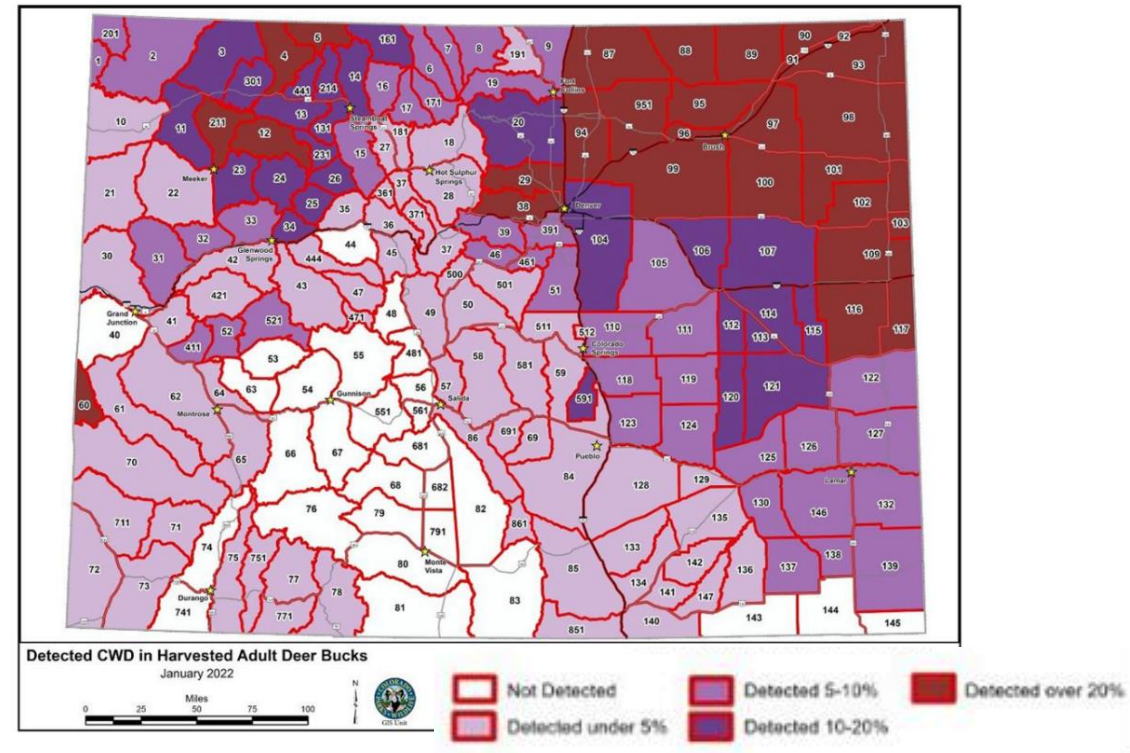
## Recent Prevalence Estimates after 43 years with disease

First detection in the wild – 1981

Baiting was never allowed

~56.5 million acres of geographic spread

NO UNITS over 30% prevalence

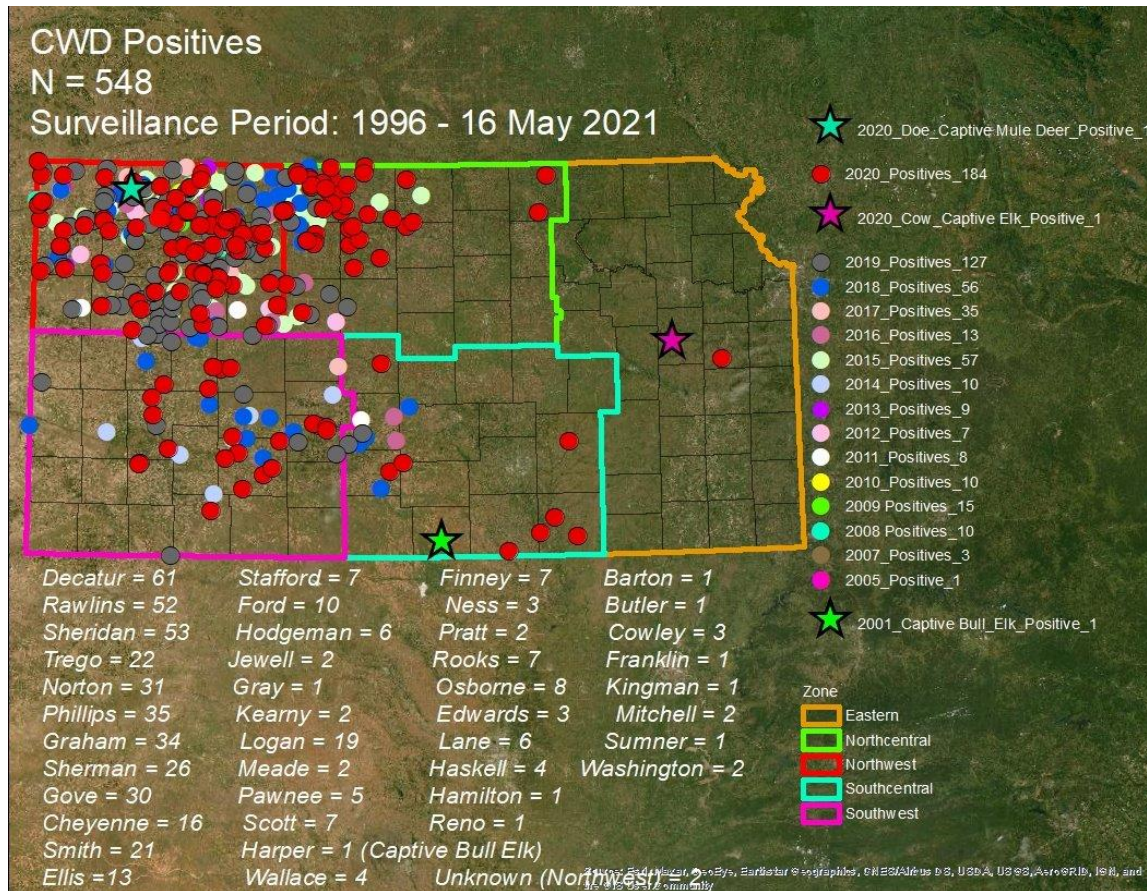


# Kansas (2005-2021) vs North Dakota (2009-2023)

**First detection in the wild- 2005**

**Continues to allow baiting**

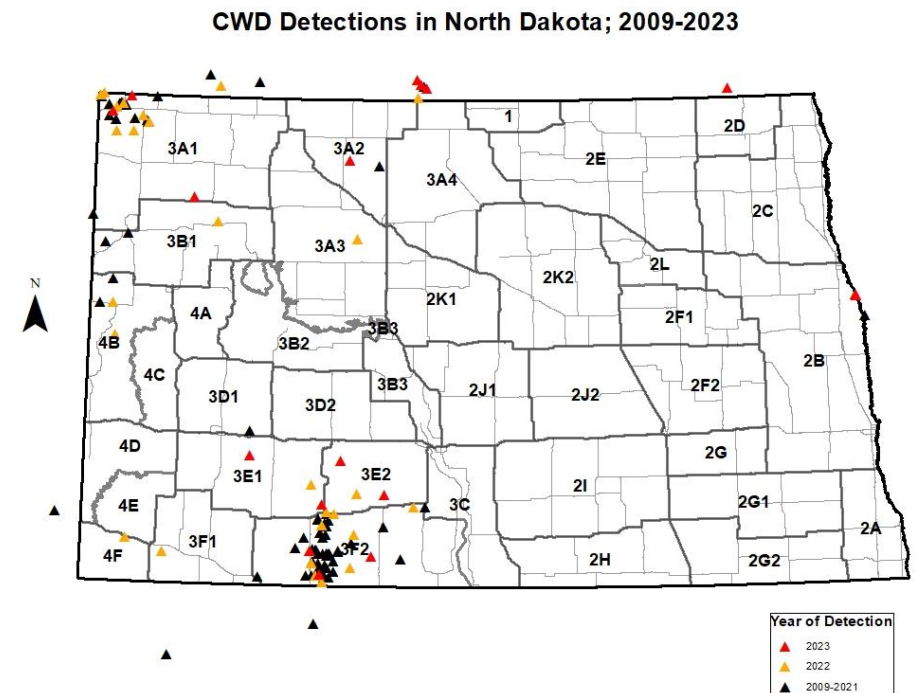
**16 years with disease – 548 positives**



**First detection in the wild – 2009**

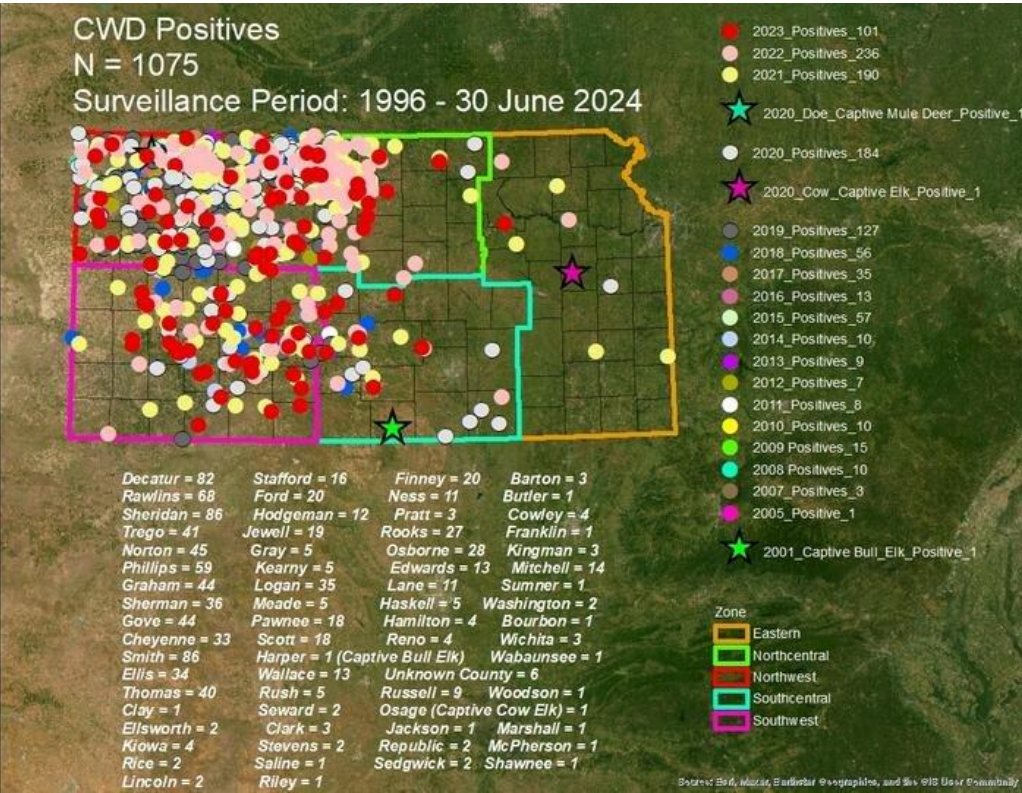
**Baiting Bans**

**14 years with the disease – 105 Positives**



# Kansas after 2024, now over 1,200 cases

First detection in the wild- 2005  
 Baiting is legal and widely popular  
 19 years with disease – 1,075 positives in the wild  
 Finding sick deer is relatively common



South Dakota -First detection in the wild – 2001  
 Baiting is not legal  
 23 years with the disease – 438 wild deer and elk positives  
 Single digit prevalence outside of Wind Cave NP  
 282 captive elk positive in Wind Cave NP)

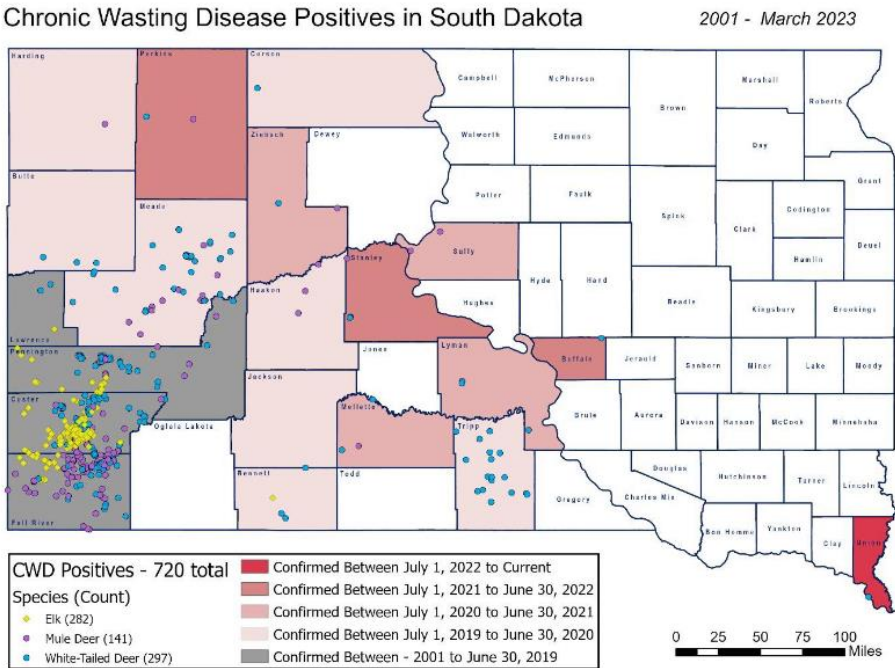
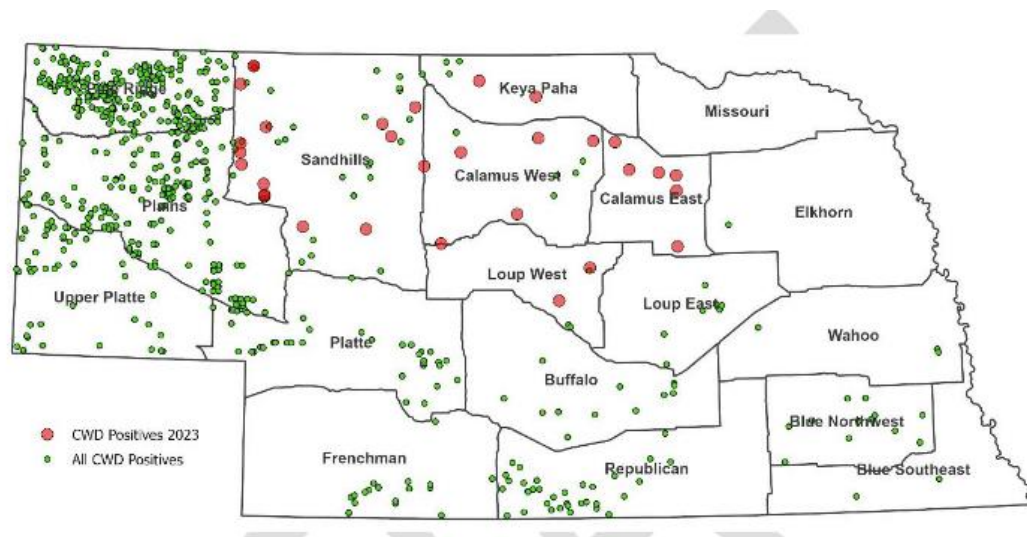


Figure 1. Locations of CWD infected free-ranging cervids in South Dakota, 2001-2023.

# Nebraska vs South Dakota

- CWD first discovered in 2000
- **Baiting allowed on Private Lands**
- **24 years** with disease
  - **1,269 positive** wild deer
  - **19 positive** elk



**First detection in the wild – 2001**

**No baiting**

**23 years** with the disease – **438 wild deer**  
**and elk positives**

**282 captive elk positive in Wind Cave NP**

Chronic Wasting Disease Positives in South Dakota

2001 - March 2023

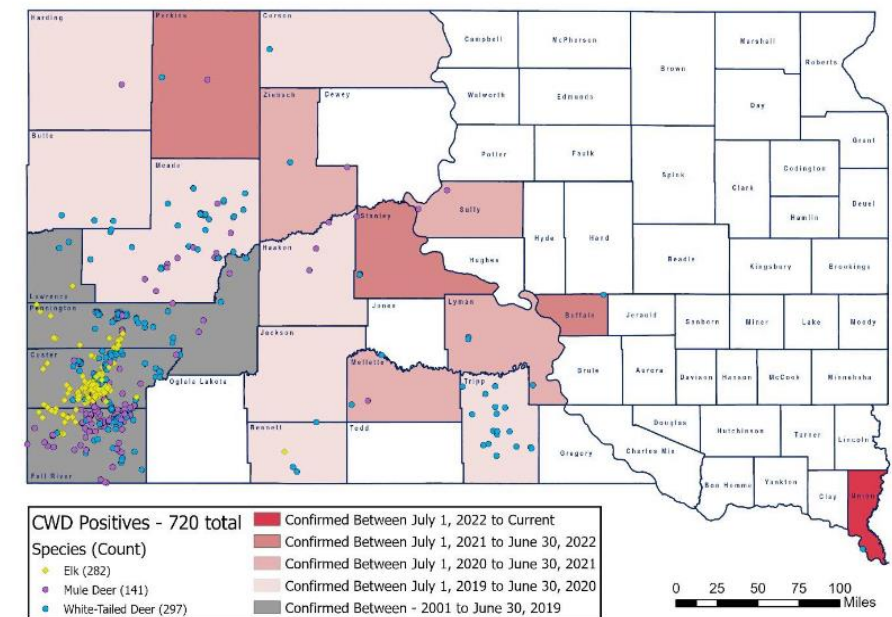


Figure 1. Locations of CWD infected free-ranging cervids in South Dakota, 2001-2023.

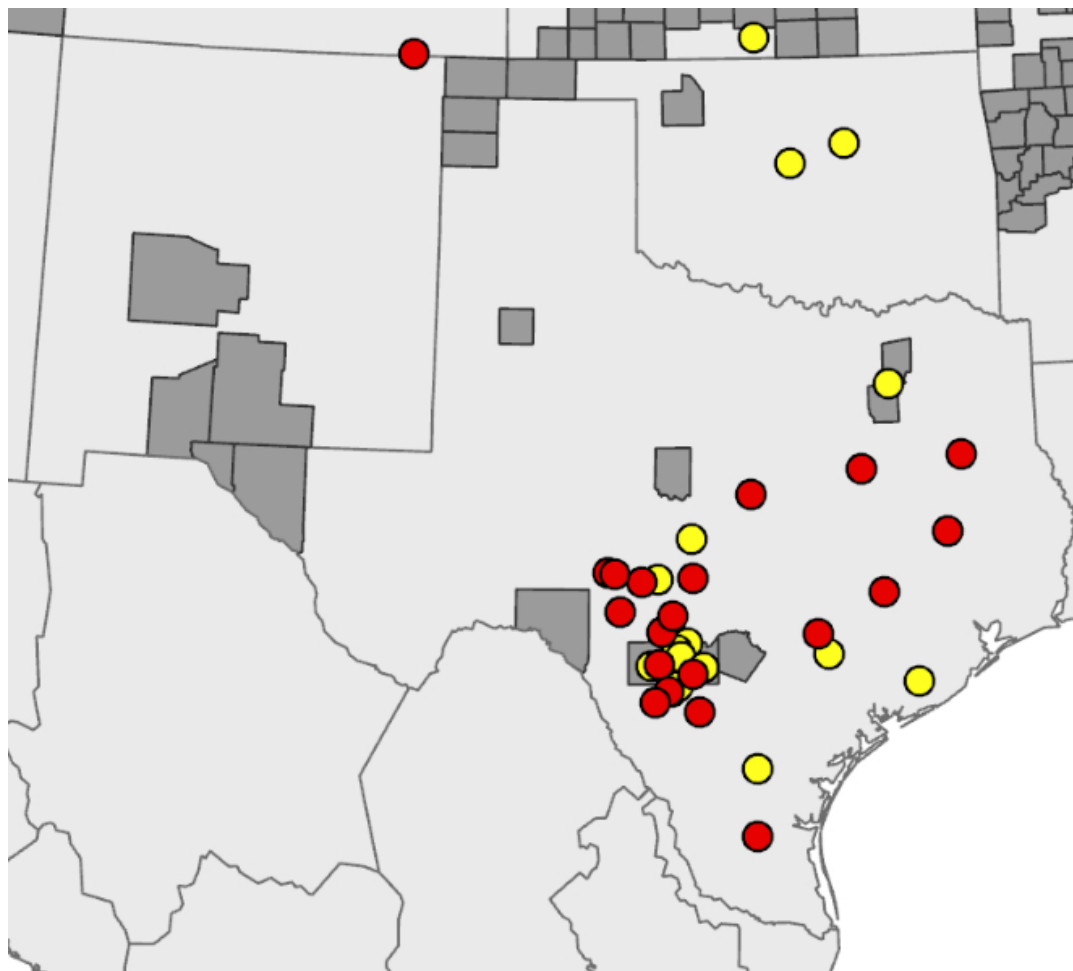
# Texas vs New Mexico

New Mexico – 2002 - 2023  
First detected in 2002

No baiting

TOTAL CWD+ = 59

Confined to 3 counties



Texas – 2012-2024  
First detected in 2012

TOTAL CWD positives =  
1,019 as of November 2024

Texas has blurred the lines  
with captive and wild deer.  
Captive deer can still be  
considered wild, and  
thousands of captive deer are  
"released" into the wild every  
year in Texas.

Significantly more  
Geographic Spread.

## Investments in fighting CWD and Winter Transmission

Biennium	License \$\$ Spent Landowner on depredation
----------	--

2009-11	\$1,068,000
---------	-------------

2011-13	\$851,000
---------	-----------

2013-15	\$253,000
---------	-----------

2015-17	\$276,935
---------	-----------

2017-19	\$689,339
---------	-----------

2019-21	\$471,910
---------	-----------

2021-23	\$699,528
---------	-----------

2023-25	\$1,761,269
---------	-------------

<b>Total \$</b>	<b>\$6,070,981 = 498 Hay yard projects from 2009 – Fall 2024</b>
-----------------	--

# Baiting Mule Deer

## Former Utah Wildlife Board member among 7 charged in illegal hunting scheme

By Carter Williams, KSL.com | Posted - Aug. 23, 2024 at 7:03 p.m.



Utah Wildlife Board member Wade Heaton, left, speaks during a meeting on Jan. 4, 2022. Heaton, who resigned from the board last year, faces 11 charges tied to an illegal baiting scheme, according to court documents. (Utah Department of Natural Resources)

### A Lucrative Hunting Business

Clients of Heaton's company told investigators they paid from \$3,000 to \$40,000 to hunt deer with his guides, often in Southern Utah's Paunsaugunt hunting unit. The clients were assigned specific deer to hunt, along with photos to recognize them. The targeted animals were also given nicknames by Heaton and his guides, including Belly Dump, Cialis, and Tokyo Drift.

Most importantly to investigators, Heaton worked with his guides to lure the deer to specific locations using corn feed, court documents said. They even cut down tree limbs to improve the line of sight from deer blinds. Investigators frequently cited WhatsApp text messages from Heaton as evidence of his intentions.

"Let's all carry 1-2 keylocks of feed and feed whatever we drive by," Heaton allegedly wrote in a text message from August 2023. "Put what you feed on this text."

### Former Utah Wildlife Official Charged in Illegal Hunting Scheme

Wade Heaton is one of seven men charged with baiting game animals, a practice Utah lawmakers made illegal in 2021.

Written by Andrew McLemore Aug 29, 2024 12:14 p.m. ET



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A former member of the Utah Wildlife Board faces nearly a dozen charges for baiting game animals through his hunting guide business.

"A reminder of our decision about feed ... We are going to keep the hunters as removed from it as possible," according to a text from Heaton in August 2021. "No feeding with a hunter in the truck. Keeping the feed out of sight of the public."

Heaton did not respond to requests for comment.



Two close-up shots of trophy mule deer bucks that were posted to Color Country Outfitter's Facebook page in 2023. Photos via Facebook

# Baiting Mule Deer



## Baiting Mule Deer



Wildlife is managed for all of the people of North Dakota, for the PUBLIC GOOD.

Article XI Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution

**Section 27.** Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good.

ND Century Code

**20.1-01-03.** Ownership and control of wildlife is in the state - Damages - Schedule of monetary values - Civil penalty.

**The ownership of and title to all wildlife within this state is in the state for the purpose of regulating the enjoyment, use, possession, disposition, and conservation thereof, and for maintaining action for damages as herein provided.** Any person catching, killing, taking, trapping, or possessing any wildlife protected by law at any time or in any manner is deemed to have consented that the title thereto remains in this state for the purpose of regulating the taking, use, possession, and disposition thereof. The state, through the office of attorney general, may institute and maintain any action for damages against any person who unlawfully causes, or has caused within this state, the death, destruction, or injury of wildlife, except as may be authorized by law. **The state has a property interest in all protected wildlife.** This interest supports a civil action for damages for the unlawful destruction of wildlife by willful or grossly negligent act or omission.

ND Game and Fish Mission Statement

North Dakota Game and Fish Department

To protect, conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitat for sustained public use.

# Insight from Theodore Roosevelt

“Defenders of the short-sighted men who in their greed and selfishness will, if permitted, rob our country of half its charm by their reckless extermination of all useful and beautiful wild things, sometimes seek to champion them by saying the ‘the game belongs to the people.’ So, it does; and not merely to the people now alive, but to the unborn people. The ‘greatest good for the greatest number’ applies to the number within the womb of time, compared to which those now alive form but an insignificant fraction. Our duty to the whole, including the unborn generations, bids us restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations. The movement for the conservation of wild life and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose, and method.”



Dear members of the Senate Ag committee, please support SB 2137. To me, this ban on hunting over bait to help to prevent the spread of CWD is a sham. It is pretty obvious to me that if I can legally bait deer for photography, or other viewing, but it's illegal to harvest a deer over the same bucket of corn, this ban is NOT based on science. If not based on the science, what's driving this? Money? Control? Ethics? I wonder...

In the last 33 years my wife and I have scrimped, saved, and sacrificed a lot to arrive at the finish line. We've spent lots of money to end up owning 900 acres. We've spent tons of family time and money building hunting blinds, planting food plots, and planting trees.

We've also spent hundreds and hundreds of hours hunting with our children, our grandchildren, extended family, and friends. Many many times we've crowded five or six into a blind at the same time. The days being spent visiting, playing cards or games, doing homework, eating, and watching for deer. We've harvested hundreds of deer, without losing any, and millions of memories. Hunting with family and friends is Sacred to us.

A few years ago the NDGF banned hunting over bait in the two deer hunting units where we own land.

We bought into the CWD scare in the beginning. It ends up CWD and the WUHAN flu have a lot in common. Money and control through fear mongering.

When the bait ban was enacted we changed our hunting activities. We went from well devised plans on focusing on trigger control, shot placement, and herd management, to the old run and gun style of hunting. You know, get up a few minutes late in the morning and do the Chinese fire drill to get into the pickup parked at the back end of the driveway. Drive around and shoot at anything legal. Long shots, running shots, whatever, blah blah blah. What a disappointment. So, for example, this past fall 2024 my family and two friends had 10 buck tags in unit 3A2. They all filled. Lots of gas wasted, 3 deer hit, and not recovered. What a joke. What an epic failure! The most memorable deer harvested was about as rewarding as cheating against your grandmother to win a game of whist, or lying to my priest at confession...

The last weekend of deer season this past year one of my grandchildren came up to me and said, this isn't really hunting anymore is it grandpa. I assured her that this was not. I promised her that from this day forward we will never shoot at a running deer, we will never shoot a rushed shot, and we will recover every deer that's been shot.

I'm just saying this, I'm done being controlled. From this day forward, I'm going to do it my way, even if it is over a bucket of corn...



Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee  
Testimony on SB 2137

North Dakota Game and Fish Department  
Dr. Charlie Bahnson, Wildlife Veterinarian  
January 17, 2025

Chairman Luick and members of the Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee, my name is Dr. Charlie Bahnson. I serve as Wildlife Veterinarian for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

The question at hand is whether the authority to restrict hunting over supplemental feed should lie within the Governors proclamation. The Legislature has considered this question before. Bills in 2007 and 2009 would have banned baiting statewide, while a bill from last session would have stripped the ability to restrict it. All three bills failed, with the sentiment being that a wildlife disease issue should be left up to the state game and fish agency and the flexibility within the Governor's proclamation. Today, we revisit the topic.

As Wildlife Veterinarian, I'll argue that this is an important tool. One aspect of my job is to monitor wildlife diseases in our state. Some are well established. Epizootic hemorrhagic disease, highly pathogenic avian influenza, and chronic wasting disease are a few examples. We also keep our eye out for other diseases that may be in our wildlife but are yet to be recognized. That's important because some have implications not just for wildlife, but also people or livestock -- things like brucellosis or bovine tuberculosis. If either of those diseases were to become established in our wildlife populations, it would be devastating for our livestock industry because you'd have continued risk of spillover from one to the other, threatening export markets. This has occurred in other states. Given this possibility, we hope to identify potential issues early and intervene before they become well established in our wildlife. With any of these disease issues, proclamation allows us to manage with flexibility and responsiveness compared to if it is set in state statute.

The Game and Fish currently employs this tool in a portion of the state to combat a specific threat: chronic wasting disease. CWD is a fatal brain disease that affects deer, elk, and moose. It's currently rare in our state which means it's very tempting to write off. However, as infection rates climb - as a larger portion of your herd consists of these sick animals - the impact becomes larger, to a point where you can no longer ignore it. That means finding sick deer. That means producing fewer mature animals to hunt. This new cause of mortality will cut into the "harvestable surplus" meaning fewer licenses if we're trying to maintain population levels. In the most extreme situations, that cause of mortality can outpace the herd's ability to compensate, resulting in population declines. The tipping point at which these things will happen will vary. In some western herds, declines were documented at as low as 30% infection rates. From our work

with colleagues who manage western herds heavily infected with CWD, I can also share that the impacts are real – fewer deer, disappearance of older age classes, lots of calls to come euthanize sick, neurologic animals. We don't want this in North Dakota.

Now all of this is based off evidence in the form of peer reviewed science, the gold standard for understanding these sorts of phenomena. You'll see that reflected in the CWD management plan and baiting document included in your packets.

We're not dismissing how important baiting is to a lot of people. And as a lifelong hunter, I can understand why some are upset. If baiting has been a part of how you hunt for years, it's hard to imagine hunting without it. When I go into the field, I want as much leeway as possible to hunt in my preferred style. However, regulations are in place to protect the resource- the resource that we all share. It is in everyone's interest for the deer herd to be as healthy as possible- for the good of wildlife, people, and livestock in this state.

Ultimately, we do our best to navigate some sort of middle ground on this issue, balancing the wishes of those who enjoy hunting over bait with the fact that both research and past agency experience demonstrate that congregating deer adds voluntary disease risk. Navigating this middle ground opens us up to criticism from both sides. We take plenty of it, but that's our job. We ask that you allow us to keep doing it. The Governor is committed to managing this long-term disease with a commonsense approach. That requires the flexibility afforded through annual proclamation to address a changing, dynamic issue with a changing, dynamic approach. We ask you to vote no on this bill.

My name is Erik Burke. I am a third generation North Dakotan, husband of a hunter, and father of three hopeful future hunters. I am an avid outdoorsman and casual but hopeful conservationist. I am writing this testimony in support of SB 2137.

My family owns approximately 90 acres of mixed pasture and hay ground in Grand Forks County. As a result, to legally hunt deer on my property I must either draw a firearm permit from the lottery system or hunt with archery equipment. I believe that this is a fair system.

After the passing of my father nearly all of our property is dedicated to wild game. We have spent considerable time and resources improving habitat and food for wildlife on our property. Given our location in eastern North Dakota this is primarily beneficial to white tailed deer.

I have used supplemental feed for attracting deer to my hunting grounds when legal. I have also not taken a deer in three years due to the dismally low deer population. Many of my friends and family have also not taken a deer in recent years. They are basing their decisions from what they have seen firsthand from their pickup window, tractor seat, or hunting blind. Based on every bit of research I have seen, CWD in no way has contributed to the decline of the deer population. Hunting near a small food source should not take the blame over loss of habitat, climate, and predators.

If we are interested in continuing hunting as a North Dakota tradition, we need to preserve the rights of hunters. We also need to protect the rights of landowners who have the best interest of wild game in mind. I want my children to continue the tradition. I want them to be stewards of the land and wildlife. I want them engaged and I want to give them every opportunity to have a successful hunting experience while keeping conservation in mind. What I am saying is I want them to see wildlife while sitting in a hunting blind or stand. This is why I support SB 2137.

In favor of senate bill 2137.

## **2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES**

### **Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee**

Fort Union Room, State Capitol

SB 2137

1/17/2025

A bill relating to the use of supplemental feed for hunting.
--

1:44 p.m. Chairman Luick opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Luick, Vice-Chair Myrdal, Senator Marcellais, Senator Weston, Senator Weber, Senator Lemm

#### **Discussion Topics:**

- Diminishing wildlife populations and herd culling
- Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and other disease monitoring/prevention
- Bating restrictions and wildlife management
- Local county wildlife clubs
- Definition, function and environmental contamination of a prion
- Prion and environmental testing
- Symptoms and process of death
- Deer outfitters and tourism
- Alternative food sources and supplemental feeding
- Case number increases in other states
- Regulatory authority of feeding bans
- Detected and confirmed cases of CWD
- Bovine tuberculosis or brucellosis
- Livestock transportation restrictions

1:45 p.m. Marty Beard, resident of Menoken, ND, testified in favor.

1:48 p.m. Scott Schmidt, property owner southeast of Bismarck, testified in favor.

1:50 p.m. Dr. Charlie Bahnson, Wildlife Veterinarian for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, testified in opposition and submitted testimony #29749.

2:00 p.m. Brock Wahl, Chairman of the North Dakota Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, testified in opposition and submitted testimony #29743.

2:38 p.m. John Bradley, Executive Director of the ND Wildlife Federation, testified in opposition and submitted testimony #29655.

2:43 p.m. Phil Mastrangelo, on behalf of the ND Chapter of the Wildlife Society, testified in opposition.

2:26 p.m. William Jensen, resident of Bismarck, ND, testified in opposition.

2:54 p.m. Gary Masching, resident of Mandan ND, testified in opposition.

2:56 p.m. Dr. Charlie Bahnson, Wildlife Veterinarian for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, answered the committee's questions.

3:04 p.m. Chairman Luick adjourned the meeting.

*Audrey Oswald, Committee Clerk*

TESTIMONY OF JOHN BRADLEY  
NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
SENATE BILL 2137  
SENATE AGRICULTURE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 17, 2024

Chairman Luick and members of the Senate Agriculture and Veteran Affairs Committee:

For the record, I am John Bradley, Executive Director of the North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF). I'm here today representing our 1,500 members in 15 affiliated wildlife and sportsmen's clubs across North Dakota that make up the North Dakota Wildlife Federation. NDWF opposes SB 2137. This is not simply my opinion - this is an organization that is built on our grassroots. Our members and affiliates bring ideas forward through a delegate and resolution process, and just like you are elected to represent your districts, they represent their clubs and their members throughout the state. Our affiliates supported via our resolution process that, and I quote:

"Therefore, be it resolved that the North Dakota Wildlife Federation supports the North Dakota Game and Fish Chronic Wasting Disease and Surveillance Plan 2023 – 2027 and the proposed actions and strategies to manage and restrict the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease."

SB 2137 would severely undermine the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's (NDG&F) authority and ability to manage deer and deer hunting with the best-available science. Specifically, the bill removes the authority from NDG&F to issue rules or adopt a policy or practice prohibiting the supplemental feed on private property for the hunting of big game animals. The bill, and the removal of management authority from NDG&F, is a direct attempt to undermine chronic wasting disease (CWD) management efforts in the state and would have a detrimental impact on managing other diseases (bovine tuberculosis) as well.

The practice of baiting and its role in deer management has grown in terms of controversy and complexity in the last decade. Our deer managers are working hard to implement methods and tactics to mitigate the spread of diseases, specifically CWD. The science tells us that supplemental feeding (baiting) increases unnatural, man-made density around a single food source and therefore increases the potential for direct and indirect contact among individuals. We understand that natural congregation occurs in our deer herds, but we shouldn't remove what we as humans can control from our management toolbox. When it comes to CWD, we are buying our future selves time to figure this disease out and discover new ways to reduce and someday hopefully eliminate CWD from the landscape. Outside of CWD, there are 11 other deer diseases that are thought to be spread by direct contact, including bovine tuberculosis (TB), some of these diseases, left unchecked, can severely impact our livestock producers as well.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) cites that unnatural concentration of cervids facilitates CWD transmission and establishment if CWD prions are present. AFWA,

(which is made up from every state game and fish agency, as well as the National Rifle Association, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Boone and Crockett Club, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, National Wildlife Federation, Wild Sheep Foundation, etc.) lists the prohibition of baiting or feeding wild deer as a best management tool for the prevention of CWD introduction and establishment. SB 2137 intentionally removes this management tool from the authority of NDG&F.

Furthermore, this bill would also have a negative impact on hunting opportunities for sportsmen and women. Healthy wildlife populations are essential to the sustainability of hunting opportunities, and the spread of diseases such as CWD and TB can have a significant impact on these opportunities. By limiting the ability of the department to protect wildlife populations from disease, SB 2137 would also limit the opportunities for deer hunting in the long run. Wildlife management decisions, and especially disease management decisions, should remain in the hands of professional wildlife managers. SB 2137 would result in a massive setback for disease and deer management in North Dakota. We urge a Do Not Pass on SB 2137.

Additional information on Bovine Tuberculosis:

### **Bovine Tuberculosis and Baiting**

Bovine tuberculosis (Bovine TB) is a disease found in mammals caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium bovis* (*M. bovis*). In North America, Bovine TB is most commonly found in domestic cattle and captive and wild cervids (white-tailed deer, elk, etc.) Bovine TB has been greatly reduced in the cattle industry since the National Cooperative State-Federal Bovine Tuberculosis eradication program began in 1917. Currently, most states are accredited as "Bovine Tuberculosis-free" by the United States Department of Agriculture, however, outbreaks do still occur throughout the United States. Cattle, captive cervids, and wild white-tailed deer are considered reservoir hosts for Bovine TB. A reservoir host is a species in which Bovine TB can persist and be transmitted among individuals within a species or be transmitted to another species. Wild white-tailed deer may pose the greatest threat to the establishment of Bovine TB on the landscape because they move freely across the landscape and may contact multiple domestic cattle herds.

Both Michigan and Minnesota have had outbreaks of Bovine TB in wild white-tailed deer. In September 2005, the first case of bovine tuberculosis (BTB) in 34 years was discovered in Minnesota and led to a loss of Minnesota's Bovine TB free status. In October 2007 and January and February 2008, four additional cattle herds and deer infected with BTB were discovered in Roseau and Beltrami counties and Minnesota's BTB status was changed from "modified accredited advanced" to "modified accredited" in April 2008. Each of these designations increased regulatory requirements (and costs) for animal testing, record keeping, eradication practices, slaughtering and shipments of cattle within state and across state lines. The 2005-2009 BTB outbreak in Minnesota, which involved 12 infected herds, was estimated to cost approximately \$60 million. (Buhr et al., 2009). This estimate did not include the cost of ongoing

heightened surveillance efforts in the region, nor the economic impact of the outbreak on the broader Minnesota cattle industry.

### **How can Bovine TB spread?**

Cattle, captive cervids, and wild white-tailed deer can contract BTB through direct contact with an infected animal, either another deer or cattle or through shared feeding with an infected animal at artificial bait piles, and areas where cattle are fed or cattle feed is stored.

### **Why is Bovine TB an important issue in wild deer?**

Human health is the main concern; given that Bovine TB is transmissible to humans. Additionally, Bovine TB is not a naturally occurring disease in white-tailed deer. Deer can also be a reservoir for Bovine TB potentially transmitting Bovine TB to uninfected deer and also to uninfected cattle through direct contact or through shared feeding. Because deer are free-ranging they have the potential to contact multiple cattle herds and transmit Bovine TB across the landscape.

### **Baiting Bans as a Tool**

Bovine tuberculosis (BTB) is spread through similar mechanisms as CWD, making it a useful model for understanding CWD. Baiting and feeding has demonstrably been shown to facilitate increased transmission of BTB in deer. Baiting and feeding enabled the BTB outbreak in Michigan to persist and spread. Infection rates decreased after restrictions were applied. These continue to be a pivotal component of reducing the spread of this disease within deer and limiting the economic impact to the cattle industry.

### **Why is SB 2137 harmful?**

Wildlife management decisions, and especially disease management decisions, should remain in the hands of professional wildlife managers. SB 2137 would result in a massive setback for wildlife and livestock disease in North Dakota. If a Bovine TB outbreak were to occur, the ND Game & Fish Department would be limited in their tools to help the landowner and the livestock industry fight the spread of Bovine TB.

### **Sources:**

Cosgrove MK, O'Brien DJ, Ramsey DSL. 2018. Baiting and feeding revisited: modeling factors influencing transmission of tuberculosis among deer and to cattle. *Front. Vet. Sci.* 5:306

Buhr Brian, McKeever Kyle, Adachi Kenji. 2009. Economic impact of bovine tuberculosis on Minnesota's cattle and beef sector



**BACKCOUNTRY  
HUNTERS & ANGLERS  
NORTH DAKOTA**

**TESTIMONY OF BROCK WAHL  
NORTH DAKOTA BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS  
SENATE BILL 2137  
HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCE COMMITTEE  
January 17, 2025**

The North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers recommends a **Do Not Pass** on Senate Bill 2137 of the 69th legislative assembly. This bill would strip authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish to implement their CWD Management Plan by prohibiting the Game and Fish from banning baiting practices. Just like the 2023 baiting bill (HB1151) we view this as ballot box biology.

While our chapter does not have a stance on baiting ethics, we do have a stance on legislation or ballot initiatives that seek to restrict or control the ability of the wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties. Duties that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations, and as stated in Article XI, Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution,

**“Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good.”**

The public trust doctrine, supported by over a century of federal case law, makes it clear that all North Dakotans own the wildlife. This is codified in North Dakota Century code Section 20.1-03-03,

**“The ownership of and title to all wildlife within this state is in the state for the purpose of regulating the enjoyment, use, possession, disposition, and conservation thereof, and for maintaining action for damages as herein provided.” and “The state has a property interest in all protected wildlife. This interest supports a civil action for damages for the unlawful destruction of wildlife by willful or grossly negligent act or omission.”**

Our fellow North Dakotans at the Game and Fish act as our trustees and it is their responsibility to manage the public’s trust assets (the wildlife), for the benefit of the trust corpus and all beneficiaries, both alive and unborn. With that in mind, this is not a private property rights issue; this is about publicly owned wildlife, making this a public property rights issue. And the hunting practices of a single user group do not outweigh what is beneficial for the entire public resource or the beneficiaries. Allowing baiting practices to continue in the face of a contagious and 100% fatal disease is not responsible care of our wildlife assets. We believe it is not only responsible, but necessary for the department to ban baiting practices where chronic wasting disease is found.

This bill would effectively undo over 15 years of management by the North Dakota Game and Fish to slow the spread of CWD. Since the first CWD positive deer was found in 2009, the department has spent 6 million dollars on 500 hay yard projects for landowners, to help keep animals from congregating on silage piles, hay yards, and other alternative food sources.

There is no doubt that baiting practices contribute to the spread of chronic wasting disease. Infectious prions can be found in man placed mineral licks, in the soil around those mineral licks, on feeders, and in bait piles. Research efforts have repeatedly demonstrated horizontal and environmental transmission in animals that have prolonged and repeated contact with infectious materials. Research in Saskatchewan, Michigan, and Mississippi has found that man placed food sources represent by far, the largest aggregation of cervids and leads to the most focal contact with their environment. In other words, there is no activity that congregates deer more, putting them in direct contact with other deer and potentially contaminated environments, than artificial food sources. More than natural winter herding, natural food sources, bedding, and even breeding behaviors. Additionally, there are no examples of high prevalence rates of CWD within a deer herd not having negative impacts to that population. Some are less significant, others more severe and dramatic, but all impacts are negative. This is backed up by multiple population studies GPS collaring thousands of deer.

While we sympathize with the hunters this change affects, and we understand changing long held practices can be difficult, the resource must come first. With over half the states in the nation having banned baiting and feeding of wildlife, we are confident that North Dakota hunters will adapt and overcome to be successful in the field just like the other states. We understand that baiting bans alone will not stop CWD, that deer do naturally congregate, and some of those natural occurrences will never be a variable managers can control in wild animals. But we also believe it is disingenuous to suggest that hundreds of bait piles and feeders on the landscape, being replenished repeatedly throughout the year, does not directly exacerbate the spread of CWD.

While we were disappointed to see the Department's concessions over the 2023 baiting bill, we understand their desire to try and work with hunters as best they can. While the ND Game and Fish department cannot ban feeding, unless for purposes of hunting, we agree that banning baiting where CWD is found removes the incentive to feed and will also lead to a reduction in feeding. It is our stance that the department does have the legal authority to ban feeding, and we would support joining a majority of the states in the nation and implementing a feeding ban in the units that are under baiting restrictions.

This bill is not in the best interest of the deer held in public trust, or the North Dakota public hunters who are beneficiaries of that trust. The North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers finds S.B. 2137 to be in direct violation of the North Dakota constitution, the North Dakota century code, the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, the mission of the North Dakota Game and Fish, and a breach of the public trust doctrine.

**We strongly oppose S.B. 2137**

**Board of Directors**

**North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers**

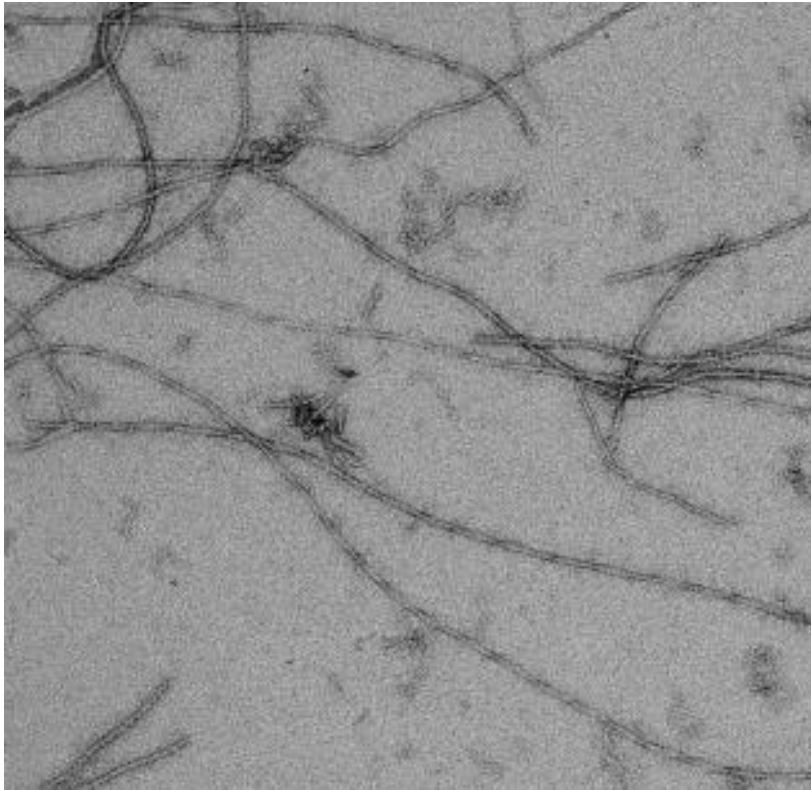
[northdakota@backcountryhunters.org](mailto:northdakota@backcountryhunters.org)



# Non-infectious vs infectious Prions

No human or animal has ever recovered from, or survived, a prion disease. Ever.

**Non-infectious Cellular Prion Protein (Required for prion infection) converted by infectious proteins.**

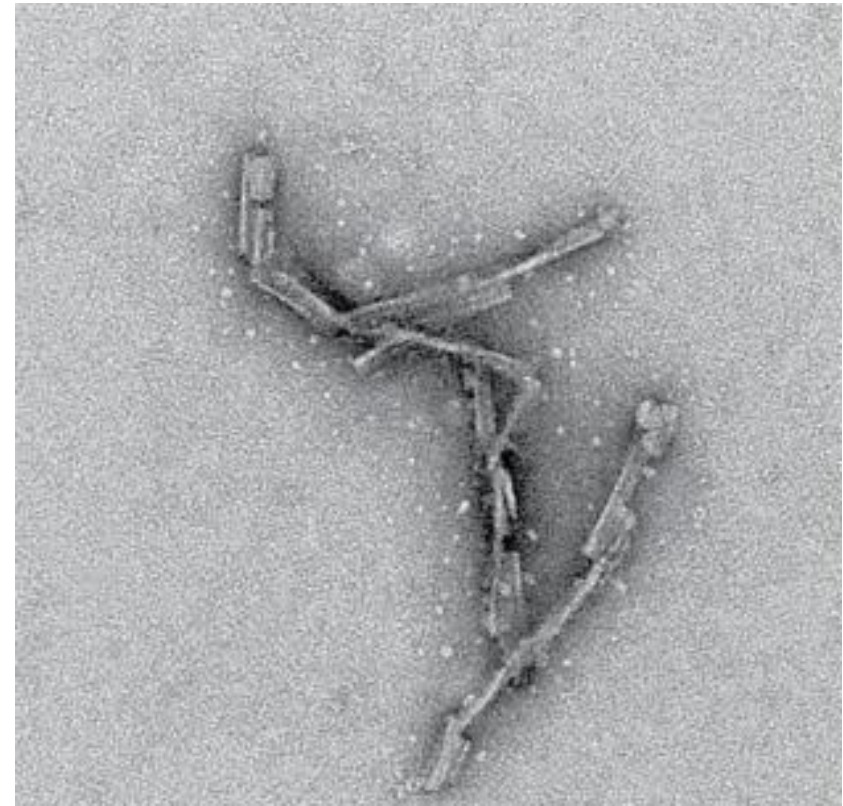


[Case Western Formal Paper](#) click link

[Case Western Atomic imaging of Prion](#) click link

[Non-infectious vs Infectious Protein](#) Click link

## Infectious Prion Protein



## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Doe
- Captured on 1/09/2017, 6 ½ years at capture
- CWD- at capture
- 165 lbs at capture, body condition score 5/10
- Recaptured on 2/04/2019
- CWD+ at recapture
- 164 lbs at capture, body condition score 7/10
- Died on 3/25/2019
- 90 lbs at death
- Lost 74lb, 45% body weight in 49 days
- 1.5 lbs per day
- CWD+ at death
- Lab necropsy
  - Severe emaciation, pneumonia



## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Doe
- Captured on 2/27/2017
- CWD+ at capture
- Est. 170 lbs at capture, body condition score 7/10
- Died on 5/29/2017
- Fell down hill
- 4 years of age at death
- 106 lbs at death
- Lab necropsy
  - Severe emaciation, pneumonia
  - Mummified fetus



## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Doe
- Collared 12/28/2017 ~3 ½ years of age
- CWD negative at capture
- 118 lbs at capture, body condition score of 0/10
- Died 02/14/2018
- CWD-positive at death
- Lab necropsy:
  - Severe emaciation
  - “The rumen contains a large amount of feed material...”
  - “Severe emaciation with adequate feed intake.”
- 78 lbs at death
- Loss of 40 lbs, ~33% body weight



- Doe
- Captured on 3/13/2017
- CWD+ at capture
- Died on 8/12/2017
- Carcass consumed

#### Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project



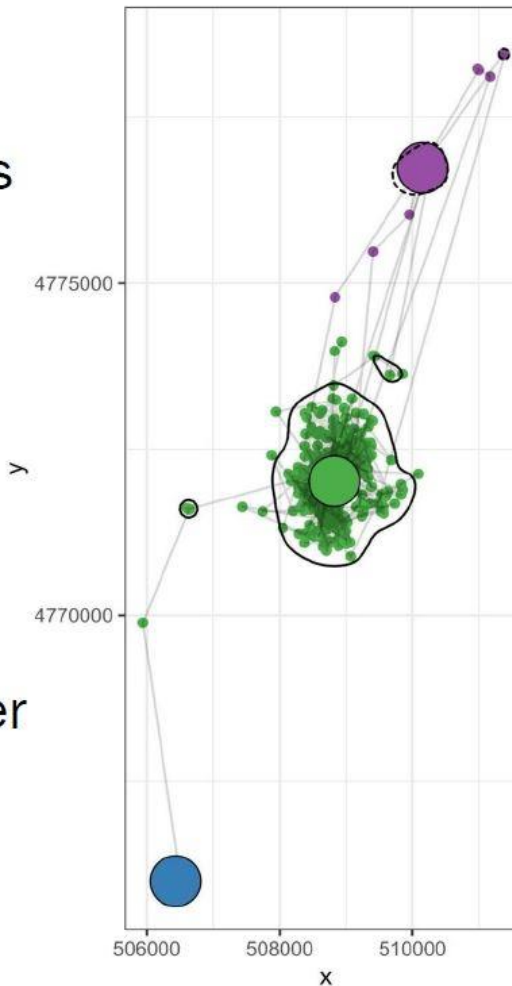
## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Doe
- Collared 12/19/2019 as ~20 months old
- 129 lbs at capture, body condition score of 10/10
- CWD-negative at capture
- Died 7/06/2022
- 50 yards from house; Landowner saw “extremely skinny and sick looking” days prior to death
- 76 lbs at death
- 53 lb, 41% loss
- CWD-positive at death
- Lab necropsy:
  - Severe emaciation
  - Mild pneumonia



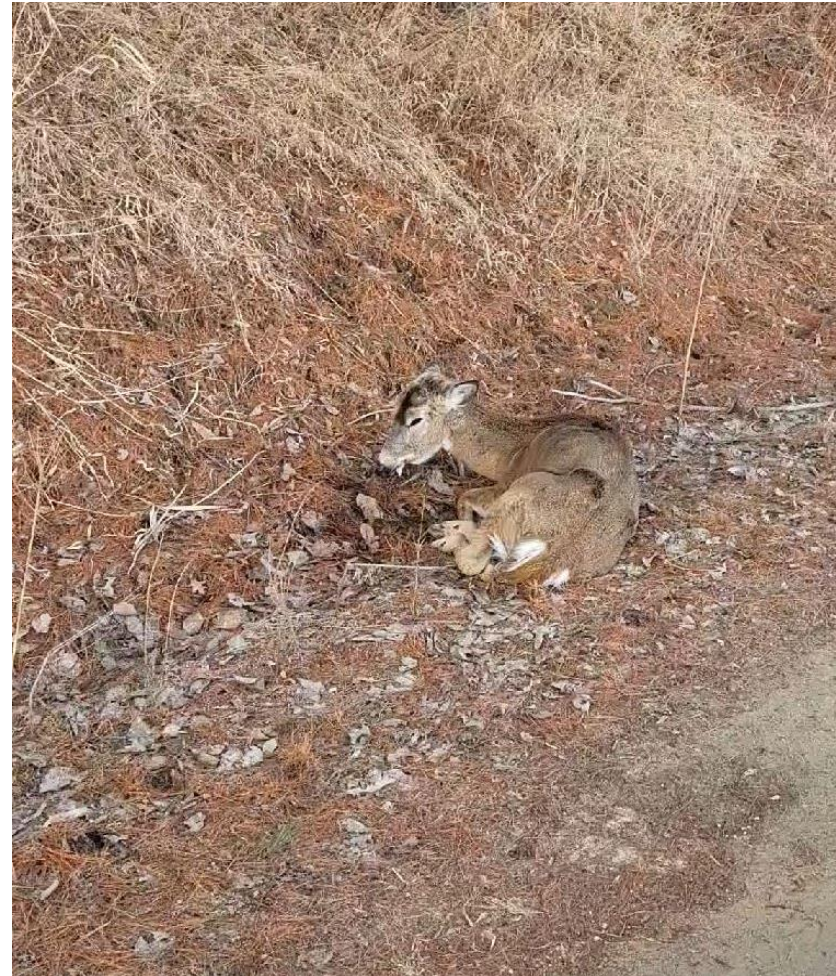
## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Born spring 2018
- Collared January 2020 as ~20 months old (20mo age class)
- CWD-positive at capture
- Died 9/29/2020
- Emaciated
- CWD-positive at death
- No necropsy as landowner did not want carcass removed





Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project –  
CWD positive doe



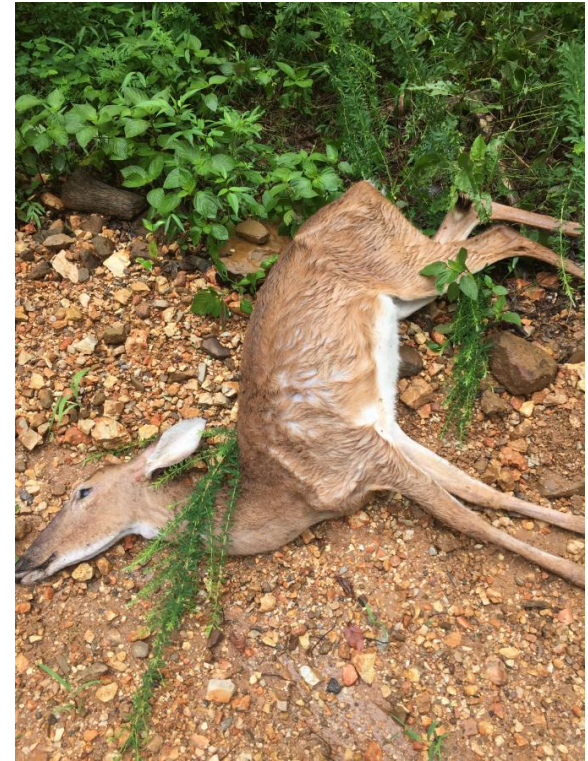
Hunter reported end stage white tailed deer



Arkansas end stage 2 yr old  
elk



Arkansas end stage doe



Arkansas end stage doe

# Arkansas Research – GPS Collared Deer

"34% of positive animals dying of no other cause other than late stage CWD."

-Dr. Jenn Ballard, Arkansas Veterinarian

## Survival



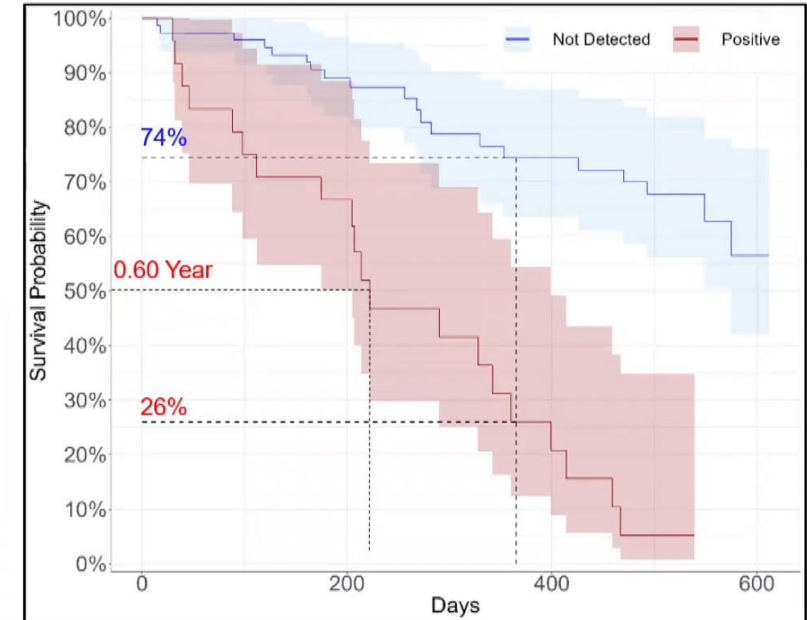
## CWD-Cause-Specific



CWD	Coyote	Bobcat	Bear	Harvest	CWD	Disease	Abnormal	Other
Positive	13%	7%	0%	24%	34%	4%	10%	7%
Not Detected	28%	10%	3%	28%	0%	10%	0%	21%

= 100%

= 100%

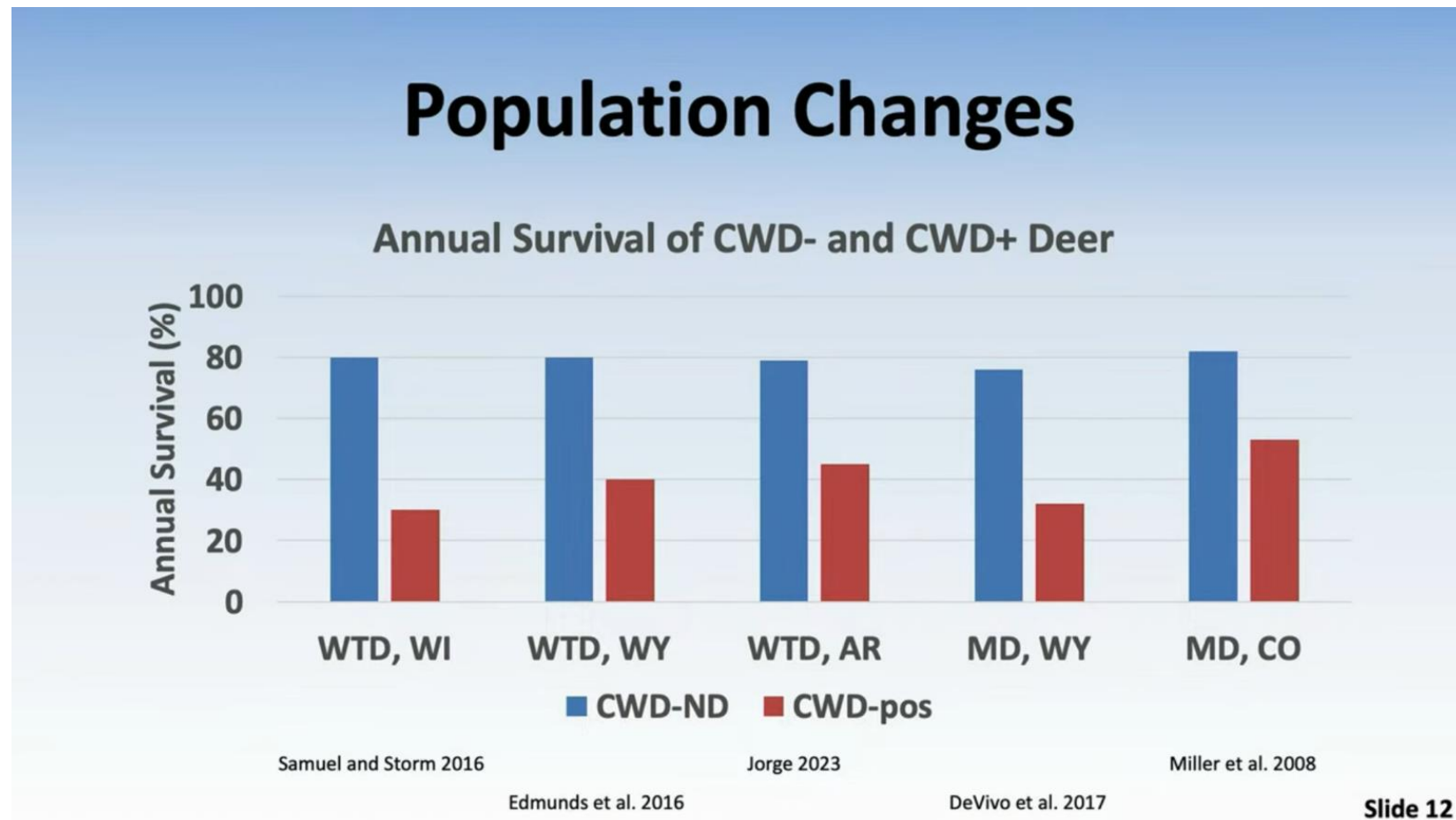


**At 1 year, positive animals are half as likely to be alive, with a 26% chance of survival.**

**By 500 days, ~5% chance of survival for positive animals vs negative animals at ~70%**

# Population impacts

Negative impacts to populations at high prevalence.... **ALWAYS!**



## Wyoming Outfitter gives up on Deer outfitting due to CWD



Riverton-area outfitter Ken Metzler in September 2022. (Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile)

"Based on hunter observation, landowner observation and [Game and Fish] personnel observation," Gregory said, "we're not seeing the deer that we used to."

Ken Metzler had a front-row seat to the crash. When [WyoFile first discussed CWD's impacts with the Riverton-area outfitter in late 2021](#), he estimated that his deer hunting operation had fallen off by 80%. Virtually every animal his paid hunters killed on leased agricultural hunting grounds — 98%, he estimated — tested positive for the disease.

Nearly three years later, Metzler reported that he's given up on his commercial deer hunting operation altogether.

"We're pretty well shut down," he said. "I'm not booking any deer hunters. I can't promise something that isn't there."

The 67-year-old outfitter has witnessed the Project Herd cycle in the past, and he retains some hope that it'll bounce back.

"It's getting worse right now, but it'll turn around a little bit," Metzler said. "If it comes back, it comes back — but it's not looking too good right now, that's for sure."

# Wyoming Outfitter gives up on Deer outfitting because of CWD

## cont...

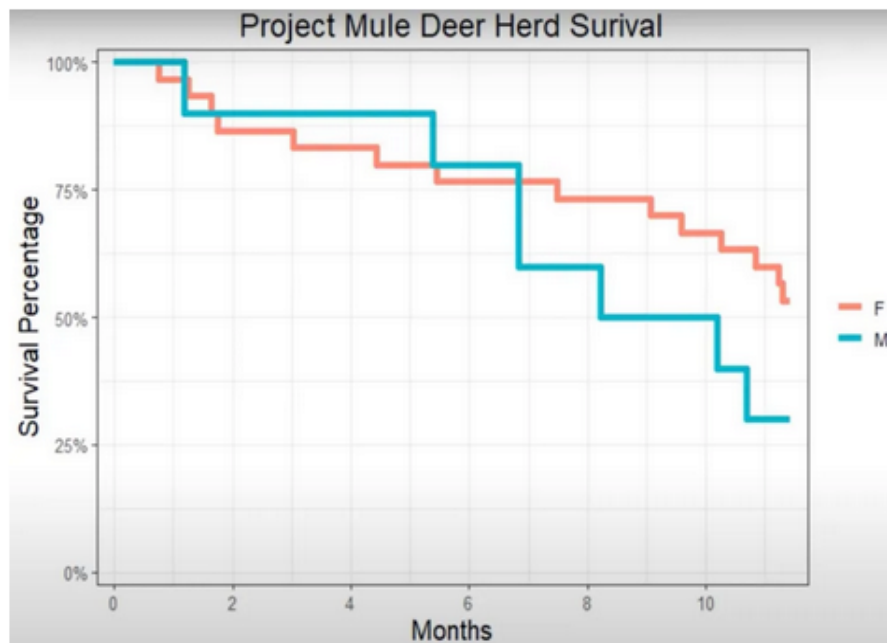
horrendous rates that threaten to wipe out the herd. Typically, adult doe mule deer have about an 85% chance of surviving any given year. In the Project Herd, however, **only half of the first cohort of 30 GPS-collared does lived through their first 12 months as a research deer. The bucks, more prone to CWD, fared worse. Three out of the 10 tracked males were still breathing after one year, but by the time WyoFile rendezvoused with Russell some 15 months into the study, 90% were dead. A single buck remained.**

### At 12 months

15 out of 30 does dead from  
3 out of 10 collared bucks dead

### At 15 months

9 out of 10 bucks dead



(Wyoming Game and Fish Department)

# Infectious Prions in the Saliva and Blood of Deer with Chronic Wasting Disease

Article in Science - November 2006  
DOI: 10.1126/science.1132661 - Source: PubMed

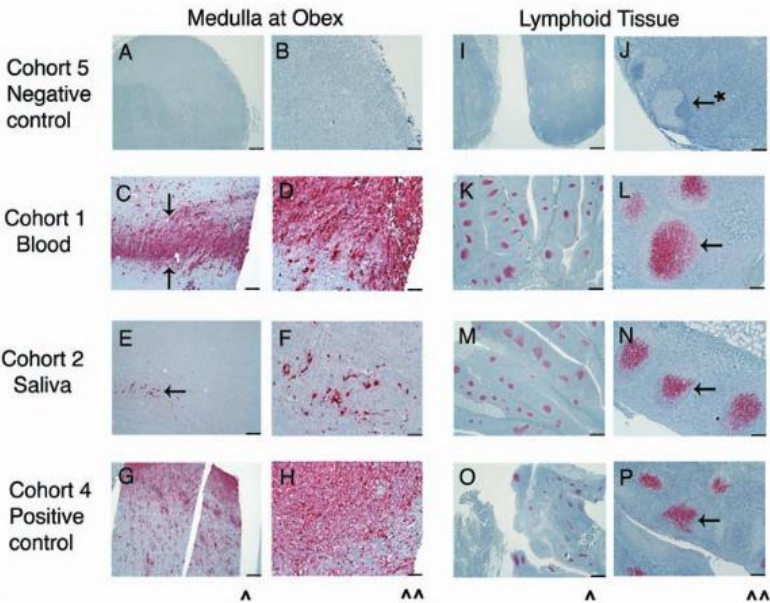
## Prions in Saliva

Animal cohort	n	Inoculum	Route (n)	Amount	No. of inoculations
1	3	Blood	IV (1), IP (2)	250 ml	1
2	3	Saliva	PO (3)	50 ml	3
3	3	Urine and feces	PO (3)	50 ml + 50 g	3 to 14
4	4	Brain	IC (2), PO (2)	1 g (IC), 10 g (PO)	1 (IC), 3 (PO)
5	2	All of the above	PO (2)	All of the above	1 to 14

**Table 2.** PrP<sup>CWD</sup> detection by longitudinal tonsil biopsy and necropsy of deer exposed to body fluids or excreta from CWD+ deer. PrP<sup>CWD</sup> assay results for tonsil (T), brain (B) (medulla oblongata at obex), and retropharyngeal lymph node (RLN) are shown. The number of deer in which PrP<sup>CWD</sup> was detected (8) is shown over the total number of deer in the cohort. One of the three original animals inoculated with urine and feces was euthanized prematurely 61 days pi due to a bacterial infection. The deer in cohorts 1, 2, and 3 were terminated at 18 months (mo.) pi. Two of the four cohort 4 deer were terminated at 20 and 21 months pi. The two cohort 5 deer were terminated at 22 months pi.

Animal cohort	Inoculum	Biopsy collection					
		3 mo. (T)	6 mo. (T)	12 mo. (T)	Termination		
					T	B	RLN
1	Blood	0/3	0/3	2/3	3/3	2/3	3/3
2	Saliva	0/3	0/3	2/3	3/3	2/3	3/3
3	Urine and feces	0/2	0/2	0/2	0/2	0/2	0/2
4	Brain	1/4	2/4	4/4	2/2	2/2	2/2
5	Negative samples	0/2	0/2	0/2	0/2	0/2	0/2

**Table 1.** CWD prion bioassay inoculation cohorts. Cohort 1 fawns received either a single intraperitoneal (IP) inoculation of 250 ml of frozen citrated blood (n = 2) or an intravenous (IV) transfusion with 250 ml fresh citrated whole blood (n = 1) each from a single CWD+ donor. Cohort 2 fawns received a total of 50 ml saliva, each from a different CWD+ donor, orally (PO) in three doses over a 3-day period. Cohort 3 fawns received a total of 50 ml urine and 50 g of feces PO, each from a different CWD+ donor, in divided doses over a 3- to 14-day period. As positive controls, cohort 4 fawns were inoculated with a 10% brain homogenate from a CWD+ donor deer through either a single intracranial (IC) injection of 1 g equivalent of brain (n = 2) or PO with a total of 10 g equivalents of brain (n = 2) divided over a 3-day period. Cohort 5 fawns (n = 2) were inoculated with equivalent amounts of each of the above materials from a single CWD-negative donor deer to serve as negative controls for the study.



**Fig. 1.** PrP<sup>CWD</sup> demonstrated by immunohistochemistry in tonsil, brain (medulla oblongata at obex), and retropharyngeal lymph node of deer receiving saliva or blood from CWD-infected donors. CWD immunohistochemistry is shown in the medulla at obex (A to H) and either tonsil or retropharyngeal lymph node (I to P) (8). Arrows indicate PrP<sup>CWD</sup> staining (red) within brain and lymphoid follicles. Arrow with asterisk indicates lymphoid follicle negative for PrP<sup>CWD</sup>. ^, scale bar = 550 μm; ^^, scale bar = 110 μm.

# Very low oral exposure to prions of brain or saliva origin can transmit chronic wasting disease

Nathaniel D. Denkers<sup>1</sup>, Clare E. Hoover<sup>2</sup>, Kristen A. Davenport<sup>3</sup>, Davin M. Henderson<sup>1</sup>, Erin E. McNulty<sup>1</sup>, Amy V. Nalls<sup>1</sup>, Candace K. Mathiason<sup>1</sup>, Edward A. Hoover<sup>1\*</sup>

**Dosage Dependent  
Prolonged and  
repeated Exposure  
to infect deer**

- **Study done on white-tailed deer**

- **Cohort 4,5,6 – Saliva inocula**

- **Cohort 4 – 3 X 10ml** dose of Saliva from a Positive Animals
  - Approx. 1 shot glass divided into 3 doses
- **Cohort 5 – 10 X 1.65 ml** doses of saliva
  - ½ Shot glass divided into 10 doses
- **Cohort 6 – One concentrated 16.5 ml** dose
- **Cohort 7 – Negative control** (Negative brain or saliva)

Cohort 4 (n = 4): 300 ng brain pool equivalent saliva (SP1+), administered as 3, 100 ng doses in 3 consecutive weeks. Each dose was contained in 10 ml of pooled saliva (total dose = 300 ng contained in 30 ml).

Cohort 5 (n = 4): 300 ng brain pool equivalent saliva (SP2+), administered as 10, 30 ng doses over 12 weeks. 30 ng doses were given once a week for 5 consecutive weeks, followed by a 4-week interval to ensure anesthesia safety, then resumed as weekly 30 ng doses for 5 consecutive weeks. Each dose was contained in 1.65 ml of pooled saliva (total dose = 300 ng contained in 16.5 ml).

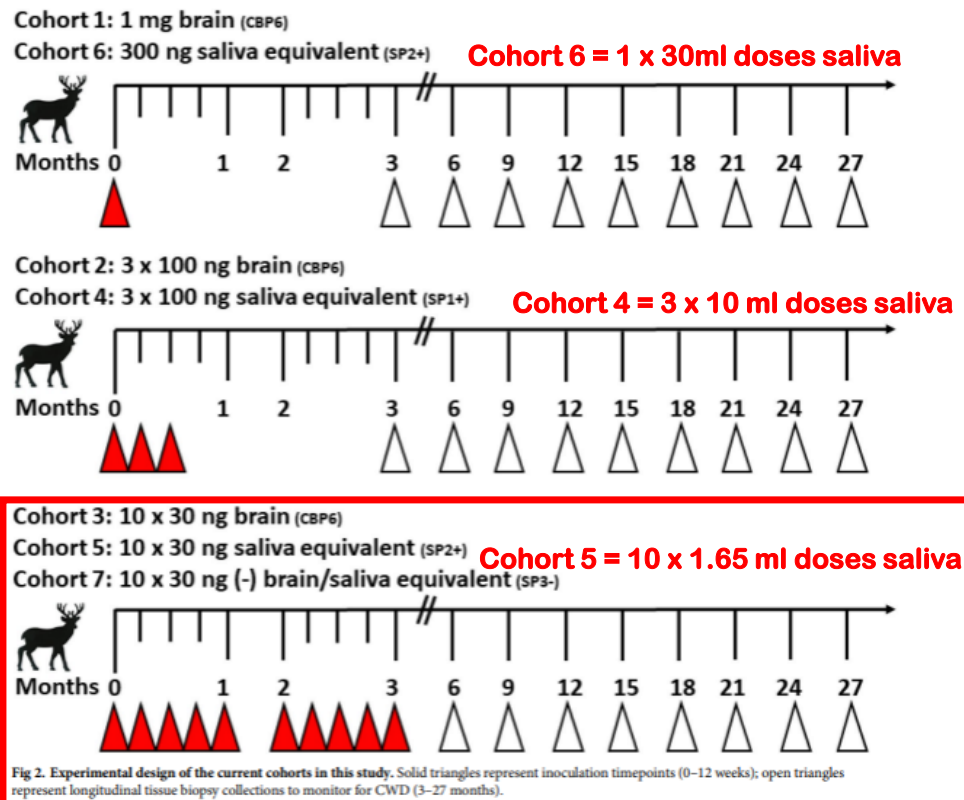
Cohort 6 (n = 4): 300 ng brain pool equivalent saliva (SP2+), administered as a single 16.5 ml dose (total dose = 300 ng contained in 16.5 ml)

Cohort 7 (n = 2): 300 ng CWD-negative brain and 300 ng CWD-negative saliva, administered together as 10, 60 ng doses (30 ng each) over 12 weeks. 60 ng doses were given once a week for 5 consecutive weeks, followed by a 4-week interval to ensure anesthesia safety, then resumed as weekly 60 ng doses for 5 consecutive weeks. Each dose contained 30 ng CWD-negative brain contained in 3 ml - 1XPBS and 30 ng negative saliva contained in 1.65 ml (total dose = 600 ng contained in 46.5 ml).

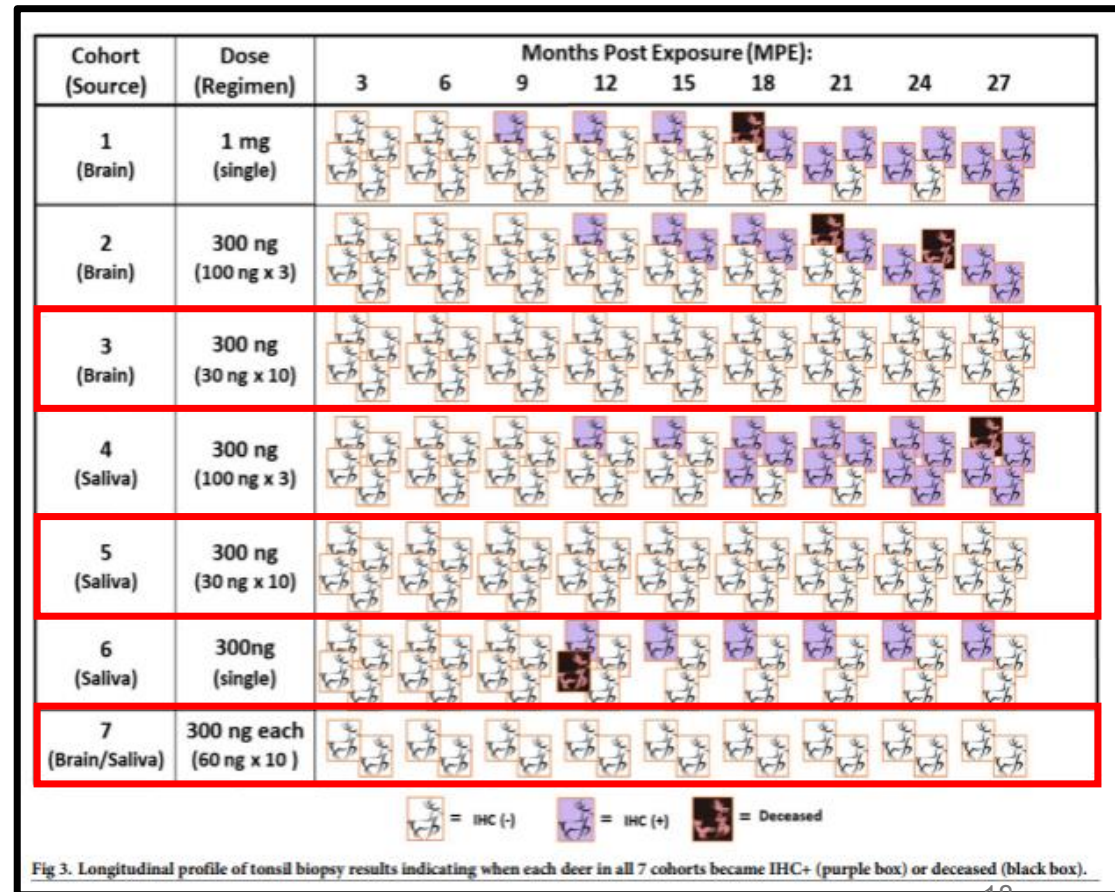
# Very low oral exposure to prions of brain or saliva origin can transmit chronic wasting disease

Nathaniel D. Denkers<sup>1</sup>, Clare E. Hoover<sup>2</sup>, Kristen A. Davenport<sup>3</sup>, Davin M. Henderson<sup>1</sup>, Erin E. McNulty<sup>1</sup>, Amy V. Nalls<sup>1</sup>, Candace K. Mathiason<sup>1</sup>, Edward A. Hoover<sup>1\*</sup>

**Dosage Dependent  
Prolonged and repeated  
Exposure to infect deer**



**Cohort 3,5,7 small doses - All remain negative**

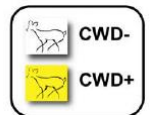


# Infectious Prions in Pre-Clinical Deer and Transmission of Chronic Wasting Disease Solely by Environmental Exposure

Candace K. Mathiason<sup>1</sup>, Sheila A. Hays<sup>1</sup>, Jenny Powers<sup>2</sup>, Jeanette Hayes-Klug<sup>1</sup>, Julia Langenberg<sup>3</sup>, Sallie J. Dahmes<sup>4</sup>, David A. Osborn<sup>5</sup>, Karl V. Miller<sup>5</sup>, Robert J. Warren<sup>5</sup>, Gary L. Mason<sup>1</sup>, Edward A. Hoover<sup>1\*</sup>

**Saliva (cohort 2).** Each of the 3 deer in this cohort received saliva from pre-clinical CWD+ donors that were 6 to 13 months pi (Tables 1, 2). PrP<sup>CWD</sup> was detected in tonsil of 1 of the 3 inoculated deer at 12 months pi, but not at earlier time points. By 19 months pi, study termination, a second animal was CWD+, by detection of PrP<sup>CWD</sup> in brain and lymphoid tissue. The remaining deer was of necessity terminated at 16 months pi due to unmanageable aggressive behavior. This animal was CWD negative as determined by extensive western blot and IHC analysis (Figs. 1, 2).

**Environmental exposure (cohort 4).** The two animals in this cohort were exposed to daily introductions of feed buckets, water, and bedding removed from pens housing deer transitioning from pre-clinical to clinical phases of the disease (Table 1, 2). One of 2 exposed deer became tonsil biopsy PrP<sup>CWD</sup>-positive at 15 months pi. At study termination, 19 months pi, both animals were CWD+ (Figs. 1, 2).



**Table 1.** CWD bioassay inoculation cohorts.

Animal cohort	n	Inoculum	Route of inoculation	Dosage (total volume)	No. of inoculations
1	3	Whole blood	IV	1 (225 ml)	1
2	3	Saliva	PO	10 ml/day for 5 days (50 ml)	5
3	3	Urine and Feces	PO	90 daily doses (85 ml+112.5 gr)	90
4	2	Environmental contact <sup>a</sup>	PO	19 mos. continuous exposure	Refreshed daily for 570 days (19 mos.)
5	4	Brain	PO	1 gr/day for 5 days (5 gr)	5

<sup>a</sup>Water, feed buckets and bedding from CWD+ deer suites.  
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0005916.t001

Cohort	3 mo.	6 mo.	T <sup>a</sup> 12 mo.	T <sup>a</sup> B <sup>b</sup> RLN <sup>b</sup> Terminal <sup>b</sup>	n+/ total n
Blood (cohort 1)	0/3	0/3	2/3	3/3	3/3
Saliva (cohort 2)	0/3	0/3	1/3	2/3	2/3
Urine/Feces (cohort 3)	0/3	0/3	0/3	0/3	0/3
Environment only (cohort 4)	0/2	0/2	0/2	2/2	2/2
Pos. control (cohort 5)	0/4	2/4	4/4	4/4	4/4

T<sup>a</sup>=tonsil, B<sup>b</sup>=Brain at obex, RLN<sup>b</sup>=Retropharyngeal lymph node, <sup>b</sup>= euthanasia dependent upon clinical disease progression or space availability, X= animal euthanized for reason other than CWD.

# Infectious Prions in Pre-Clinical Deer and Transmission of Chronic Wasting Disease Solely by Environmental Exposure (cont.)

In summary, the results reported here reconfirm that blood and saliva are sources of infectious CWD prions, consistent with previous findings [27], and further support a mechanism for efficient CWD transmission in nature. We also show that infectious prions shed into the environment by CWD+ deer are sufficient to transmit the disease to naïve deer in the absence of direct animal-to-animal contact. These observations reinforce the exposure risk associated with body fluids, excreta, and all tissues from CWD+ cervids and suggest that similar dynamics may exist in other prion infections.

## Environmental sources of CWD infection

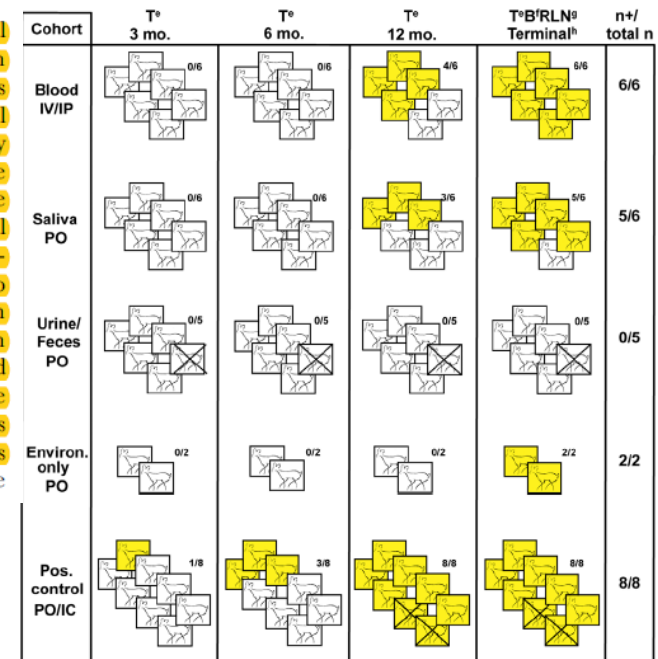
Previous studies have confirmed direct animal-to-animal contact—horizontal transmission—as an efficient mode for prion disease transmission [9,66]. Moreover, Miller and colleagues [9,67,68] have provided substantial evidence for environmental contamination as a source of CWD infection. Our bioassay study inocula doses (50 ml saliva/deer), while efficient in establishing the infectious nature of saliva, are likely unrealistic doses to be acquired in a natural setting. To emulate a more feasible natural environment-associated dose, while negating direct animal-to-animal contact, we exposed naïve deer to repeated exposures to fomites from the suites of CWD-infected deer. The study design was meant to mirror the daily habits and movements of a deer in its natural setting in which it may return to an area contaminated with small amounts of infectious prions over time. Here we provide the first report that under controlled indoor conditions CWD-naïve deer can acquire infection by exposure to fomites from the environment of CWD-infected deer, supporting the

two years. The presence of infectious CWD prions in the environment therefore strongly suggests that natural prion infection occurs by routes additional to direct animal-to-animal contact. Based on the present and our previous findings [27], we speculate that saliva may harbor the greatest concentration of CWD prions available for horizontal transmission and environmental contamination, but recognize that other routes of excretion at lower concentration and greater volume still remain plausible.

**Prolonged and repeated exposure to infect deer**

**Deer are not becoming positive in brief or short term encounters**

**This is why bait piles are high risk. Daily exposure = prolonged and repeated exposure**



T<sup>a</sup>=tonsil, B<sup>b</sup>=Brain at obex, RLN<sup>c</sup>=Retropharyngeal lymph node, <sup>d</sup>= euthanasia dependent upon clinical disease progression or space availability, X= animal euthanized for reason other than CWD.

Figure 4. Summary of naïve deer exposed to inoculum from CWD+ deer—combined with our previous published findings [27]. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0005916.g004

# Environmental Sources of Prion Transmission in Mule Deer

Michael W. Miller,\* Elizabeth S. Williams,† N. Thompson Hobbs,‡ and Lisa L. Wolfe\*

## Materials and Methods

We conducted a replicated experiment to compare CWD transmission from three infection sources: naturally infected captive mule deer (one infected deer/paddock), carcasses from naturally infected captive mule deer that had decomposed in situ  $\approx 1.8$  years earlier (one carcass/paddock), or undisturbed paddock environments where infected mule deer had last resided 2.2 years earlier. Each exposure source was replicated in three separate paddocks; two clean paddocks served as unexposed controls. Control paddocks and paddocks where live infected deer were

**Prolonged and repeated exposure to infect deer**

**Deer are not becoming positive in brief or short term encounters**

**This is why bait piles are high risk. Daily exposure = prolonged and repeated exposure**

Table. Chronic wasting disease arising in mule deer exposed to environments contaminated by residual excreta, carcasses, or other infected deer

Replicate	Exposure source			
	Infected deer	Infected carcass	Residual excreta	Unexposed
1	1/4 <sup>a</sup>	0/3	1/3	0/2
2	0/2	2/4	0/3	0/2
3	1/4	1/5	0/3	NA <sup>b</sup>
Total	2/10	3/12	1/9	0/4

<sup>a</sup>Number positive/number exposed (not including infected source deer).

<sup>b</sup>Not applicable; controls included only two replicate paddocks.

**1 year of exposure minimal positive animals**

# Chronic wasting disease model of genetic selection favoring prolonged survival in Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus elaphus*)

A. L. WILLIAMS,<sup>1,†</sup> T. J. KREEGER,<sup>2,3</sup> AND B. A. SCHUMAKER<sup>1</sup>

**NO animals were artificially inoculated.**

**No injections, no transfusions, no brain homogenate, no forced saliva intake.**

**Prolonged eating and drinking out of the same containers that CWD+ elk did.**

CWD inoculation studies have been conducted there. The TWWRU has eight, 0.2-ha elk holding pens, all of which held CWD-infected elk previous to and during this study. Elk were rotated randomly among all eight pens annually to maximize PrP<sup>CWD</sup> exposure, but were never intermingled with non-study, CWD-infected elk. Captive elk were fed alfalfa hay supplemented with a pelleted ration and provided water and a trace mineral block ad libitum. Husbandry, care, diagnostic techniques, and method of euthanasia

annually for PrP by rectal mucosa biopsy using ELISA (Spraker et al. 2009). During the analysis, 37 of 39 elk died, all of which were positive for CWD. Of those that had been examined for PrP<sup>CWD</sup> by rectal mucosa biopsy,

all elk were 27 M/M<sub>132</sub> (69.2%), 11 M/L<sub>132</sub> (28.2%), and 1 L/L<sub>132</sub> (2.6%). The genotypes of the last surviving elk were M/L<sub>132</sub> (which died in 2012) and L/L<sub>132</sub>. In 2014, the L/L<sub>132</sub> is still alive and has remained negative for PrP<sup>CWD</sup> by rectal

The previously cited infectivity and dosage research clearly shows its **large unnatural doses OR prolonged and repeated exposure** that make animals positive. Deer aren't becoming positive from brief encounters or single small exposures.

Winter herding is temporary, baiting and the incentive to hunt over bait, leads to year round bait sites that bring deer into contact with those same exact sites every day, sometimes multiple times a day.  
**Prolonged and Repeated exposure.**

The more infected deer using a bait site, the larger the accumulation of prions at the site will be and the larger the contact dose will become.

# Winter Herding

We CAN stop this....



We can't stop this...but they are obviously not the same.



This is not the same...



As this...



or this...



Deer defecating within a foot of bait block buried in the snow

# RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Mineral licks as environmental reservoirs of chronic wasting disease prions

Ian H. Plummer<sup>1</sup>, Chad J. Johnson<sup>2</sup>, Alexandra R. Chesney<sup>3</sup>, Joel A. Pedersen<sup>4\*</sup>, Michael D. Samuel<sup>1\*</sup>

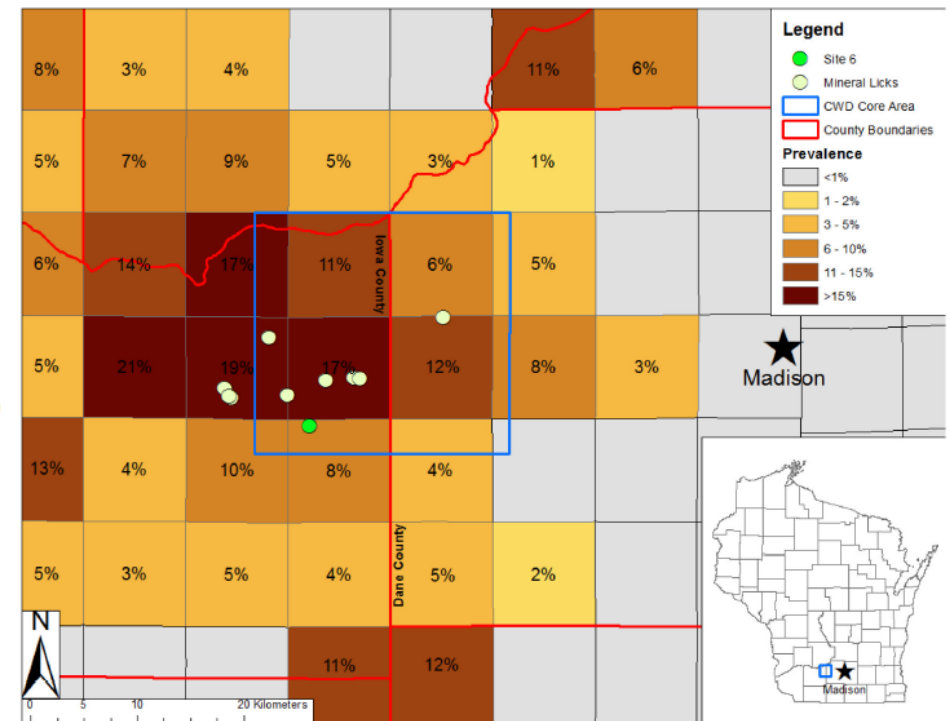
Here, we test the hypothesis that mineral licks used by deer harbor CWD prions, thus serving as potential environmental reservoirs for these infectious agents. During 2012–2015 we collected soil and water samples from 11 mineral licks (10 man-made and one natural) frequented by free-ranging white-tailed deer in a large CWD enzootic zone west of Madison, Wisconsin, USA [6] (Fig 2). We adapted a 96-well microplate variant of PMCA that

likely due in part to co-extracted inhibitors of the PMCA reaction and incomplete extraction from soil particles. The detection of prions at 9 of 11 sites sampled, however, demonstrates widespread contamination of mineral licks in the CWD outbreak zone. The generally higher detection of CWD prions in environmental samples collected from soil indicates amplification by the PMCA.

At the mineral lick site with the highest detection of CWD prions in environmental samples (Site 6), we opportunistically sampled white-tailed deer fecal pellets. We detected CWD prions in six of the 10 fecal samples after three rounds of amplification by mb-PMCA. Of eight

## Discussion

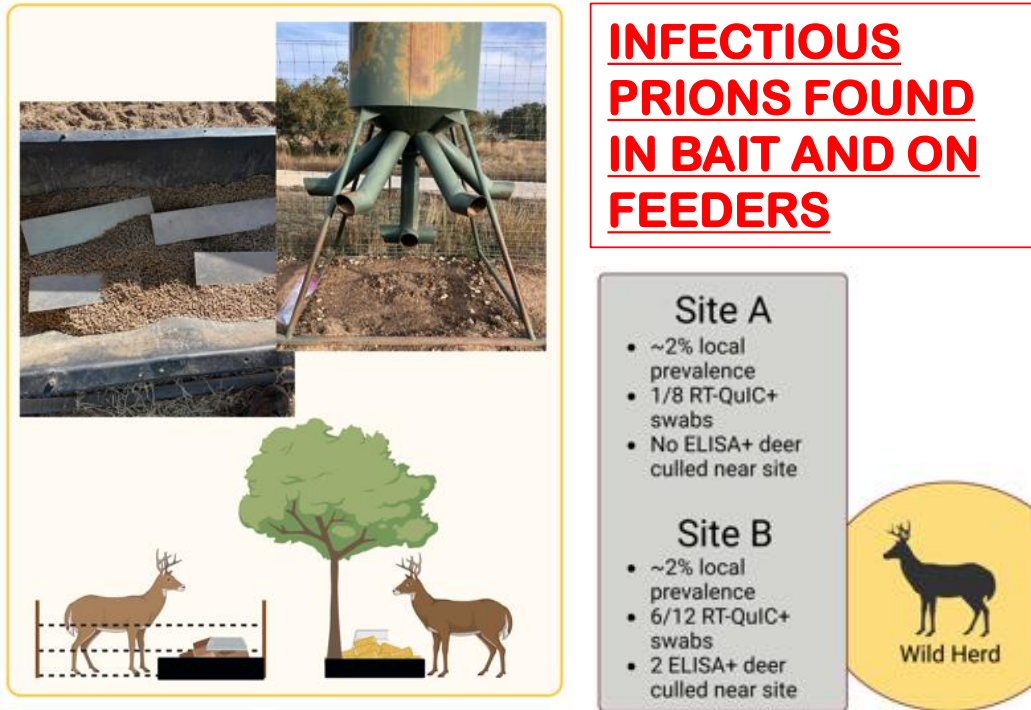
Our results demonstrate that CWD-infected white-tailed deer deposit prions at mineral licks they visit. Although the mechanism of prion deposition is unknown, we suspect deposition of saliva by infected deer during ingestion of soil and water at mineral licks has the highest potential to facilitate indirect transmission to susceptible deer. Saliva from white-tailed deer infected with CWD contains on the order of 1–5 infectious doses ( $ID_{50}$ ) per 10 mL as quantified by real-time quaking-induced conversion, where an  $ID_{50}$  is the dose of CWD prions capable of infecting half of the transgenic mice expressing cervid prion protein [48]. Frequent visitation by infected cervids could allow mineral licks to become potential “hot spots” for indirect trans-



**Fig 2. Mineral licks and chronic wasting disease prevalence.** Locations of sampled mineral licks and prevalence of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in hunter-harvested white-tailed deer from 2010–2013 in south-central Wisconsin, USA. Squares are townships of 9.66 km per side. Inset shows state of Wisconsin, USA. Site 6 denotes the mineral lick with CWD-positive fecal samples.

# CWD Sentinels: detecting environmental prion protein (ePrP) via surfaces for the early discovery of CWD

Marc D. Schwabenlander<sup>1</sup>, Catalina Picasso-Risso<sup>1</sup>, Gage Rowden<sup>1</sup>, Qi Yuan<sup>2</sup>, Erik Hildebrand<sup>3</sup>, Patrick Hagen<sup>3</sup>, Shannon L. Bartelt-Hunt<sup>4</sup>, Jason C. Bartz<sup>2</sup>, Tiffany M. Wolf<sup>5</sup>, and Peter A. Larsen<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1. A.** Sentinel surfaces placed for one week in captive deer facilities and areas with wild deer feeders/baits. **B.** Sentinels collected/swabbed. **C.** Swabs tested via RT-QuIC for CWD.

Laboratory controls of clean/unused surfaces and feed/bait components were analyzed via RT-QuIC (negative controls). Some locations had additional samples collected (e.g., water tank swabs, feeder swabs, oral swabs). Locations had variable levels of CWD prevalence.

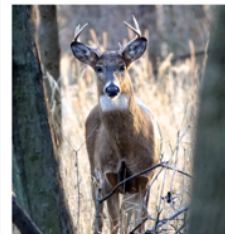
## INTRODUCTION

Scientists are developing highly sensitive chronic wasting disease (CWD) detection methodologies that utilize non-tissue samples.

Real-time quaking-induced conversion (RT-QuIC) is one such assay proven to be a more sensitive tool for CWD prion detection than current antibody-based methods (e.g., ELISA and IHC).

Similar to environmental DNA (eDNA) detection methods in aquatic and terrestrial environments, we investigated a rapid method for extracting prions from swabs of environmental surfaces to detect CWD when paired with RT-QuIC.

Laboratory investigation demonstrated that RT-QuIC detection of CWD prions recovered from surfaces (e.g., stainless steel, glass) via swabs was similar to the original CWD prion load applied to the surface.<sup>1</sup>

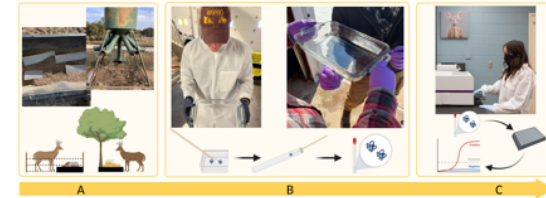


## AIM

We deployed surfaces shown to effectively bind misfolded prions as environmental prion protein (ePrP) sentinels in food sources of captive and free-ranging herds.



## METHODS

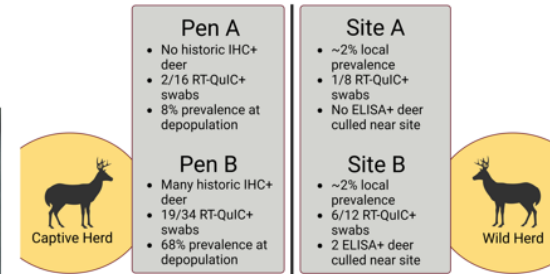


**Figure 1. A.** Sentinel surfaces placed for one week in captive deer facilities and areas with wild deer feeders/baits. **B.** Sentinels collected/swabbed. **C.** Swabs tested via RT-QuIC for CWD.

Laboratory controls of clean/unused surfaces and feed/bait components were analyzed via RT-QuIC (negative controls). Some locations had additional samples collected (e.g., water tank swabs, feeder swabs, oral swabs). Locations had variable levels of CWD prevalence.

All data are being analyzed for detection performance (e.g., run time, sample dilution) and association between environmental sample detection and CWD prevalence.

## RESULTS



**Figure 2.** Representative pens and sites demonstrating the preliminary assessment of the relationships between CWD results from sentinel swabs via RT-QuIC and associated deer tissues via ELISA and/or IHC.

## DISCUSSION

- Data collection and analysis are still in progress for all locations.
- Captive facility swab results have generally aligned with location/pen prevalence.
- Wild herd sentinel swab results and CWD positive culled deer near bait sites have been less clearly aligned, likely due to seasonal local migration patterns in the wild herd, potential for infected deer visiting multiple sites, and culling processes.
- Research indicates that low levels of prions are excreted in saliva from CWD positive deer.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, even with promising prion recovery based on the seminal laboratory swabbing method development<sup>1</sup>, it is likely in deer with early CWD infection, detection via sentinels may be limited. Additionally, deer may not test positive via IHC or ELISA on tissues but may be excreting prions in saliva at some level detectable via sentinel swabs.

## CONCLUSIONS

- ePrP detection through non-invasive methods may be used for surveillance and discovery of CWD, informing management.
- Surface sentinel surveillance may be an applicable practice for other prion and prion-like diseases in settings such as meat processing facilities and hospitals.
- Environmental factors, such as feed type, may affect results.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the facility owners and regulatory bodies for access to the research locations, collection of sentinels, and providing official CWD testing results. Figures 1 and 2 and this poster were created with BioRender.com.



## LITERATURE CITED

- Yuan Q, Rowden G, Wolf TM, Schwabenlander MD, Larsen PA, Bartelt-Hunt SL, Bartz JC. Sensitive detection of chronic wasting disease prions recovered from environmentally relevant surfaces. *Environment International*, Volume 166, 2022.
- Henderson DM, Manca M, Haley NJ, Denkers ND, Nalls AV, Mathiason CK, et al. (2013) Rapid Antemortem Detection of CWD Prions in Deer Saliva. *PLoS ONE* 8(9): e74377.

Alternative Food sources are highest incident rate for contact with other deer and environmental sites.

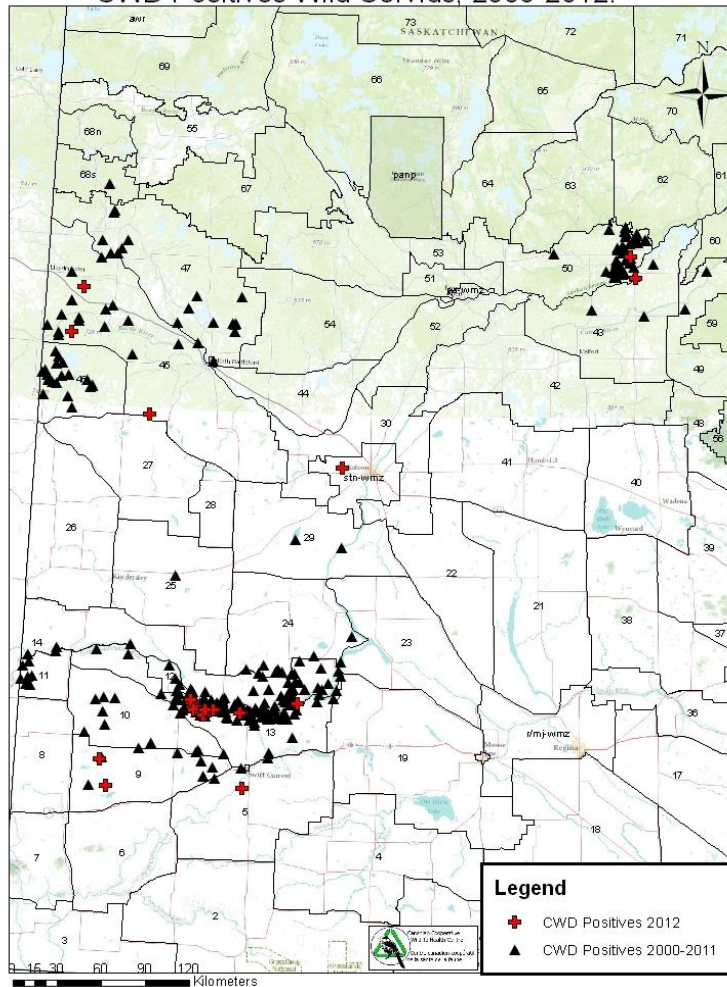
Even higher than natural winter herding.



# Saskatchewan vs North Dakota

Same number of years with disease

CWD Positives Wild Cervids, 2000-2012.



## Saskatchewan – 2000-2012

Did not follow best management practices (i.e. baiting bans)

**TOTAL CWD positives = 397**

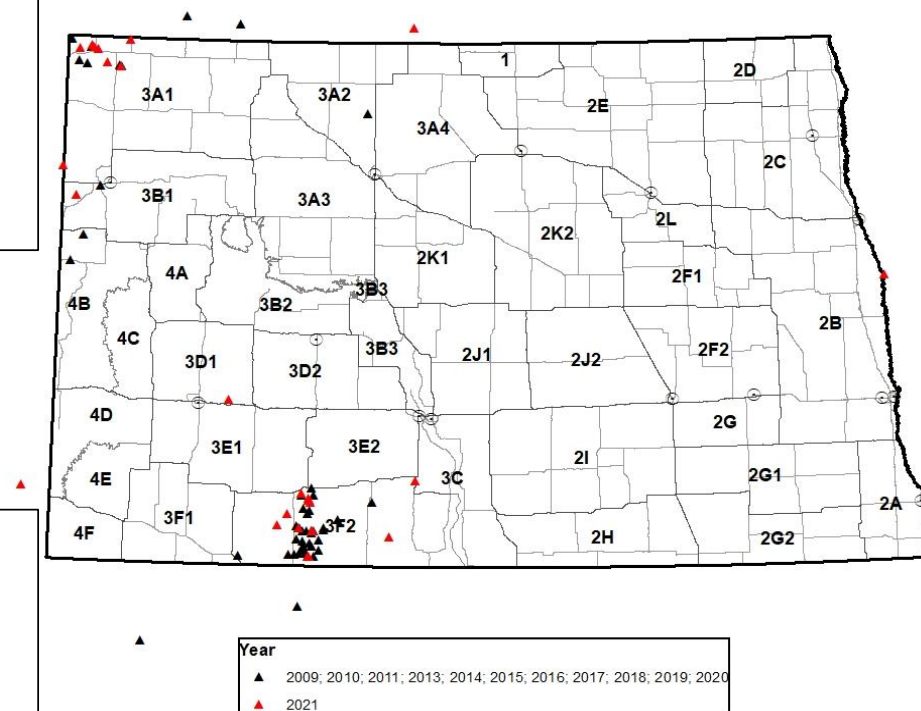
**Significantly more Geographic Spread with larger and denser hot spots**

## North Dakota – 2009-2021

Followed best management practices (i.e. baiting bans) and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on depredation measures

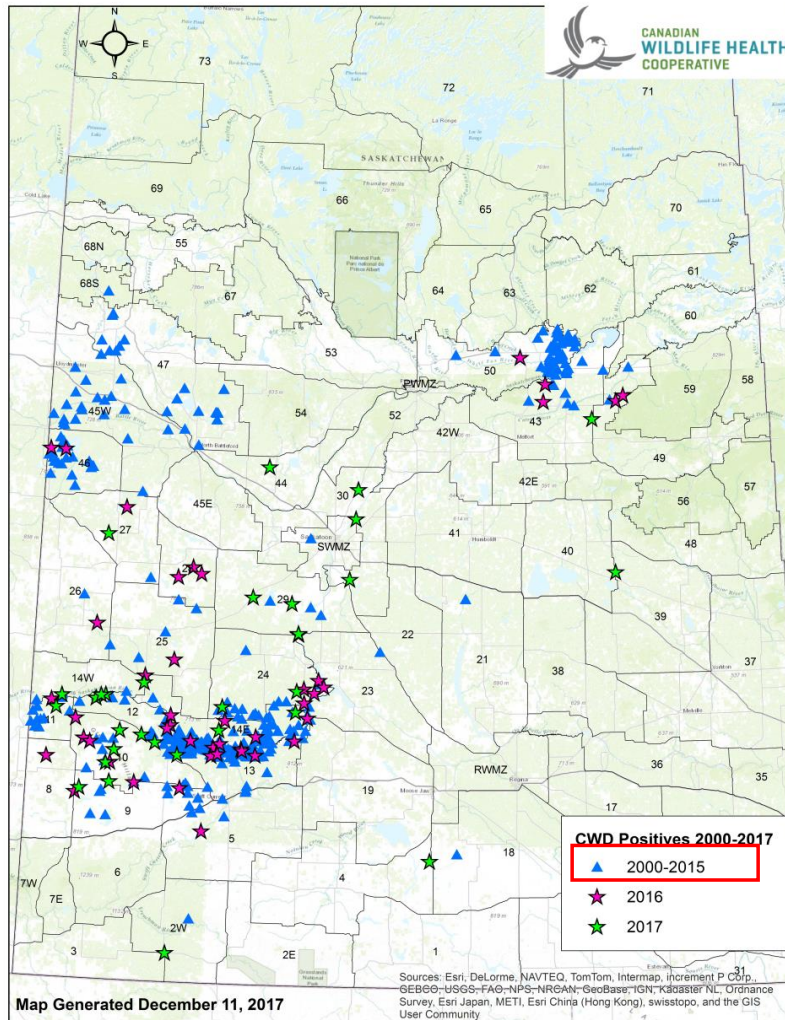
**TOTAL CWD positives = 70**

CWD Detections in North Dakota; 2009-2021



# Saskatchewan vs North Dakota

Same number of years with disease



## Saskatchewan – 2000-2015

**Did not** follow best management practices (i.e. baiting bans)

**TOTAL CWD positives = 458 even with multi-year gap in Surveillance funding (2010-2016)**

**145 miles of linear distance in Southern Saskatchewan outbreak**

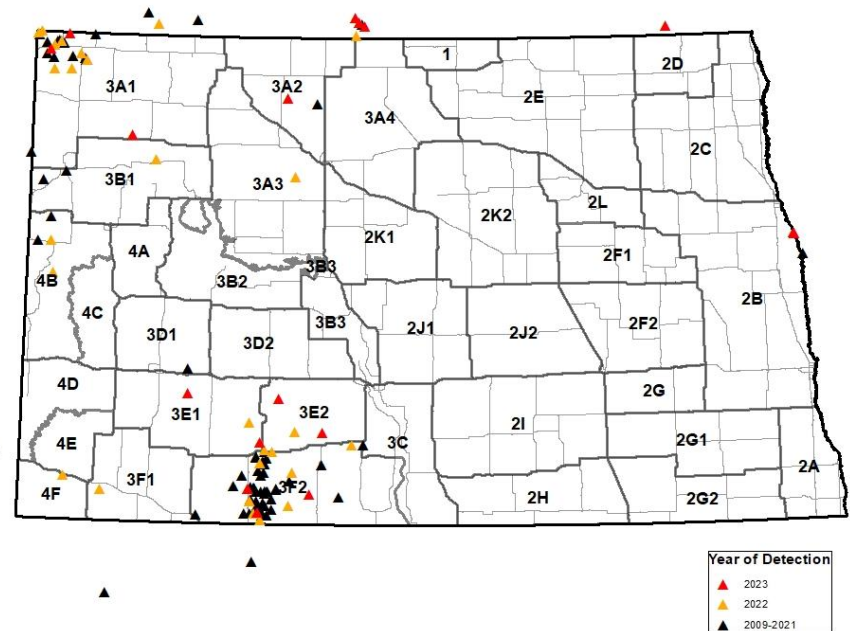
## North Dakota – 2009-2023

Followed best management practices (i.e. baiting bans) and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on depredation measures

**TOTAL CWD positives = 105**

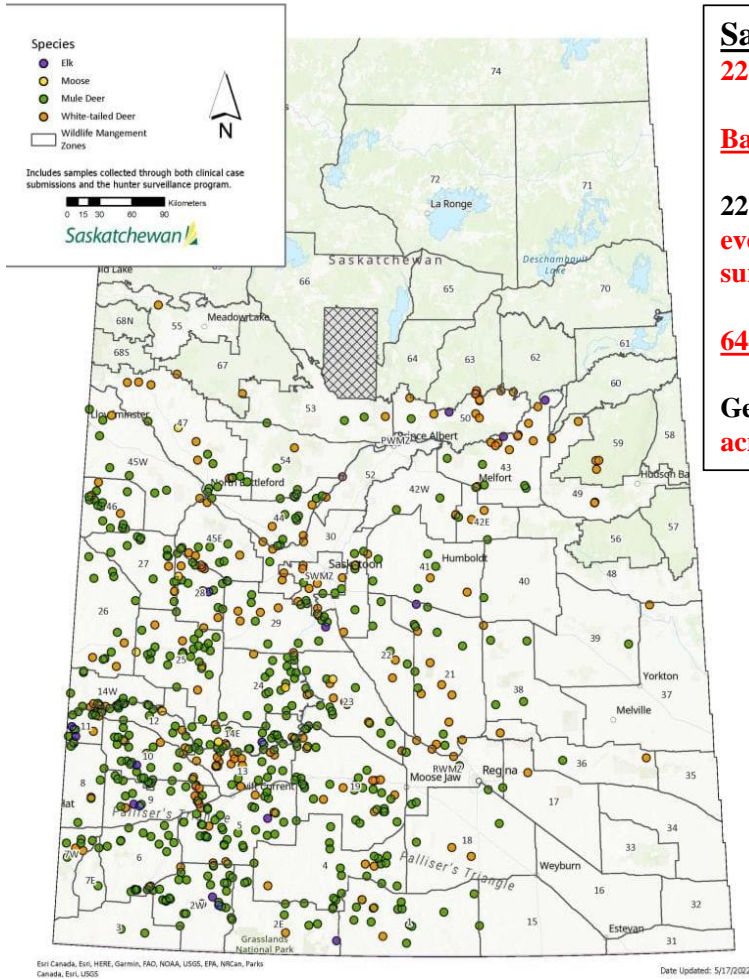
**37 miles of linear distance in southern ND outbreak**

## CWD Detections in North Dakota; 2009-2023



# Saskatchewan vs South Dakota

## 2021-22 CWD Surveillance Program Positive Test Results



**Saskatchewan – 2000 – 2021**  
**22 years with CWD**

## Baiting is legal and widely popular

**22 yr TOTAL CWD positives = 2,599**  
**even with multi-year gap in**  
**surveillance**

**644 Positives just 2021/22 report**

**Geographic Spread over ~ 70 million acres (higher density across range)**

## South Dakota – 2001 - 2021

## No Baiting

**21 yr TOTAL CWD positives = 438 in wild deer**

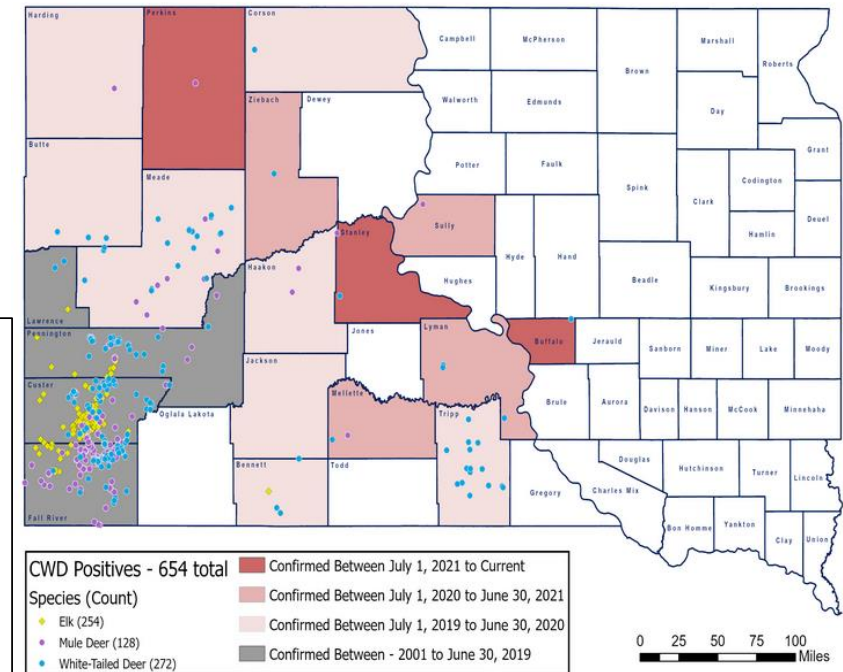
## 282 captive elk in Wind Cave NP

## 54 Positives just in 2021/22 report

**Confined to west half of the state ~ 23 million acres**

## Chronic Wasting Disease Positives in South Dakota

2001 - February 16, 2022

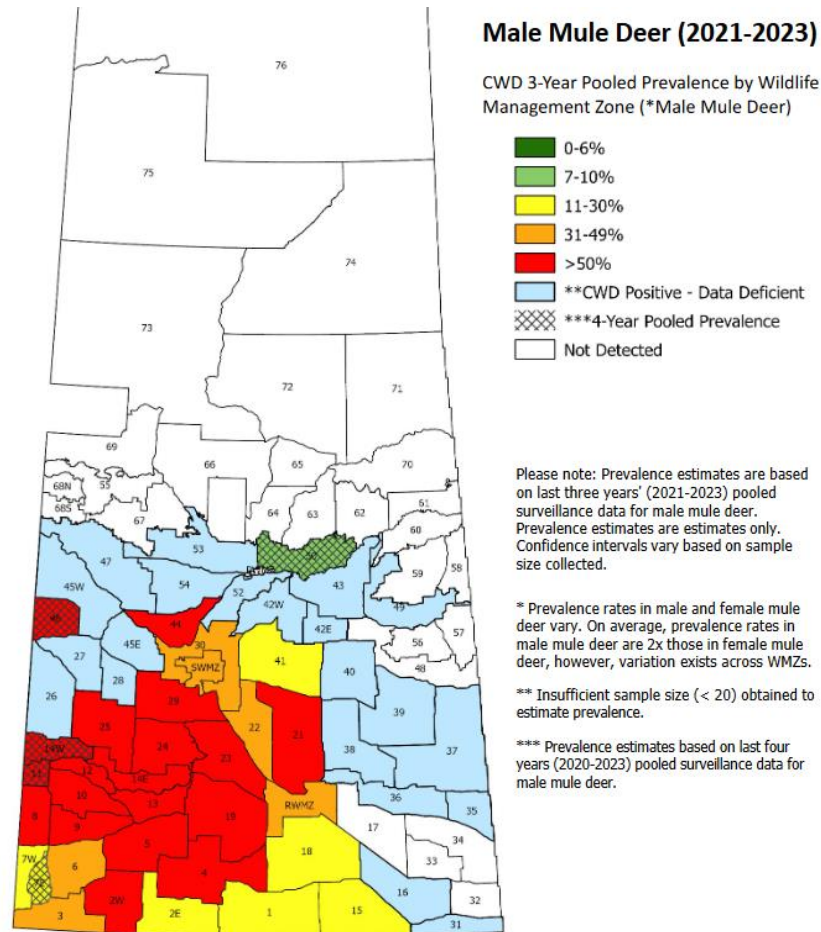


# Baiting in Saskatchewan vs no baiting in Wyoming

**Recent Prevalence Estimates after 24 years**

**~74.4 Million acres of geographic spread**

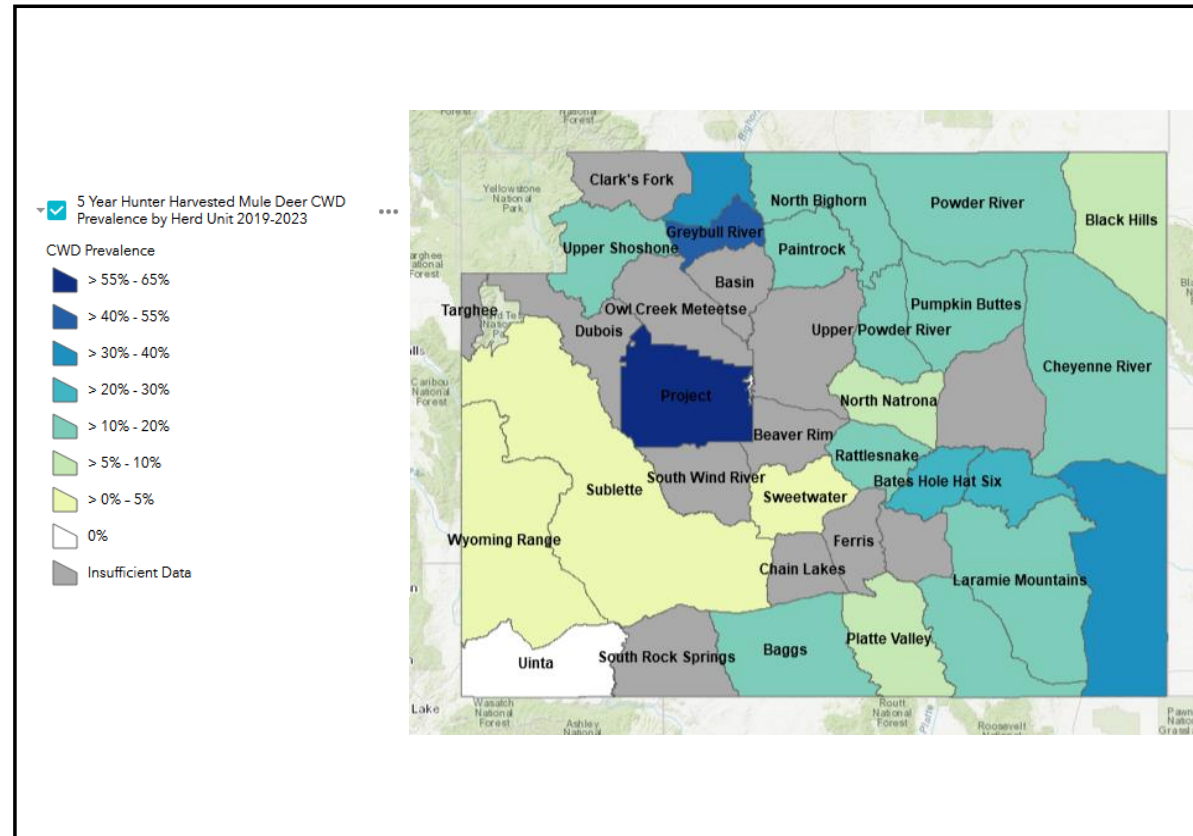
**18 units with over 75% prevalence**



**Recent Prevalence Estimates after 39 years with disease**

**~55.5 million acres of geographic spread**

**2 units over 50% prevalence**



# Saskatchewan vs Colorado Prevalence

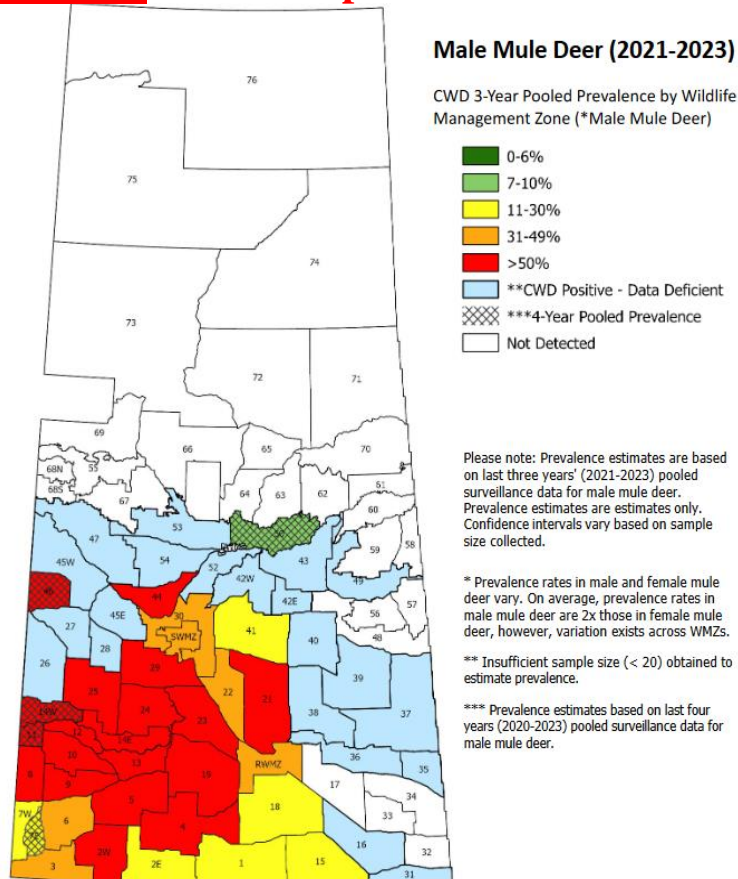
## Recent Prevalence Estimates after 24 years

First detection in the wild – 2000

Baiting has always been allowed

~74.4 Million acres of geographic spread

18 Units over 75% prevalence



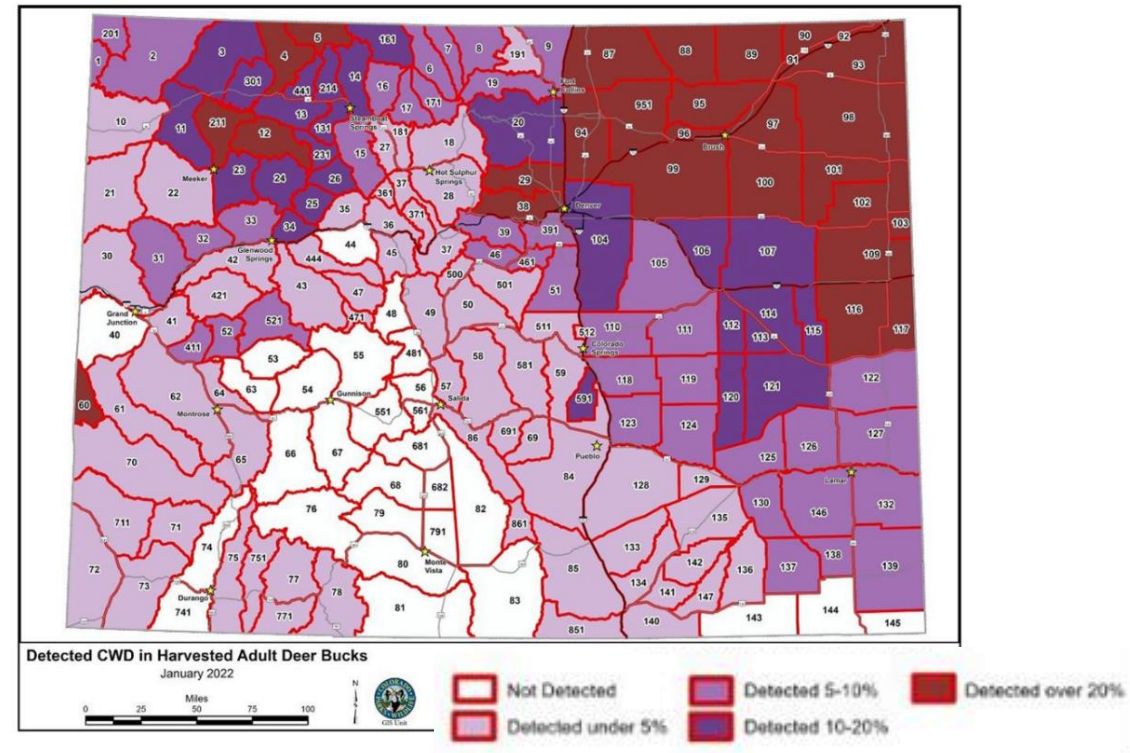
## Recent Prevalence Estimates after 43 years with disease

First detection in the wild – 1981

Baiting was never allowed

~56.5 million acres of geographic spread

NO UNITS over 30% prevalence

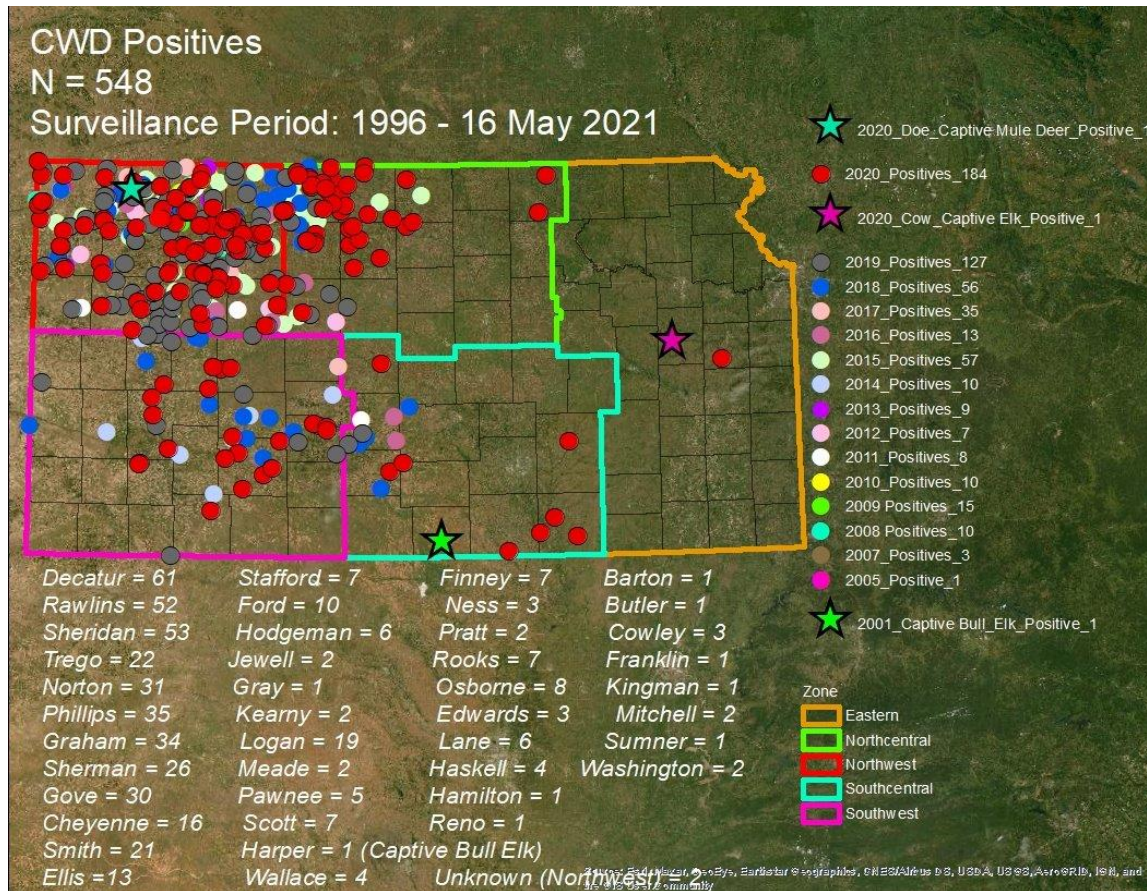


# Kansas (2005-2021) vs North Dakota (2009-2023)

**First detection in the wild- 2005**

**Continues to allow baiting**

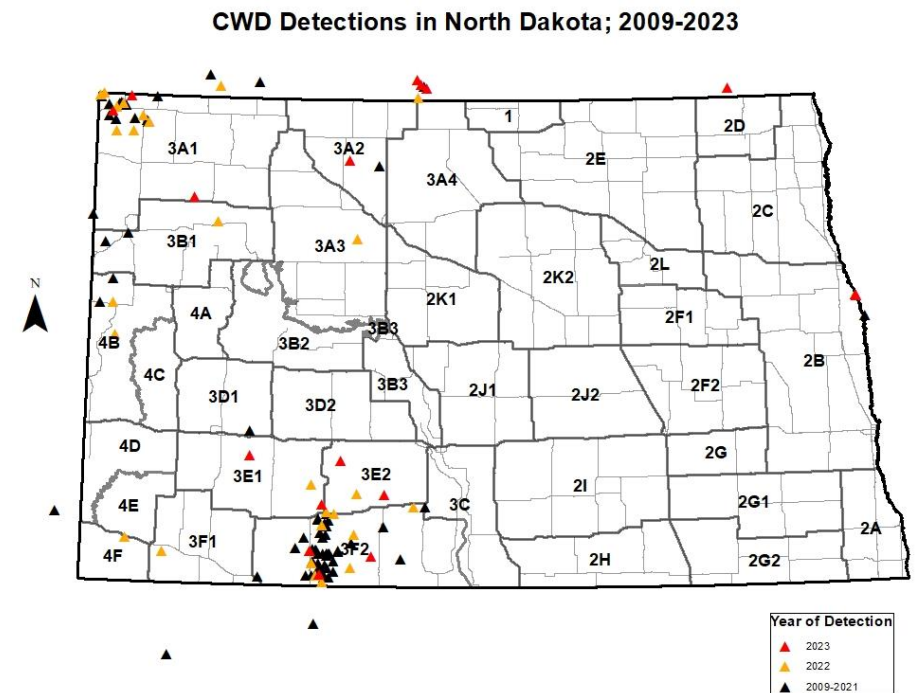
**16 years with disease – 548 positives**



**First detection in the wild – 2009**

**Baiting Bans**

**14 years with the disease – 105 Positives**



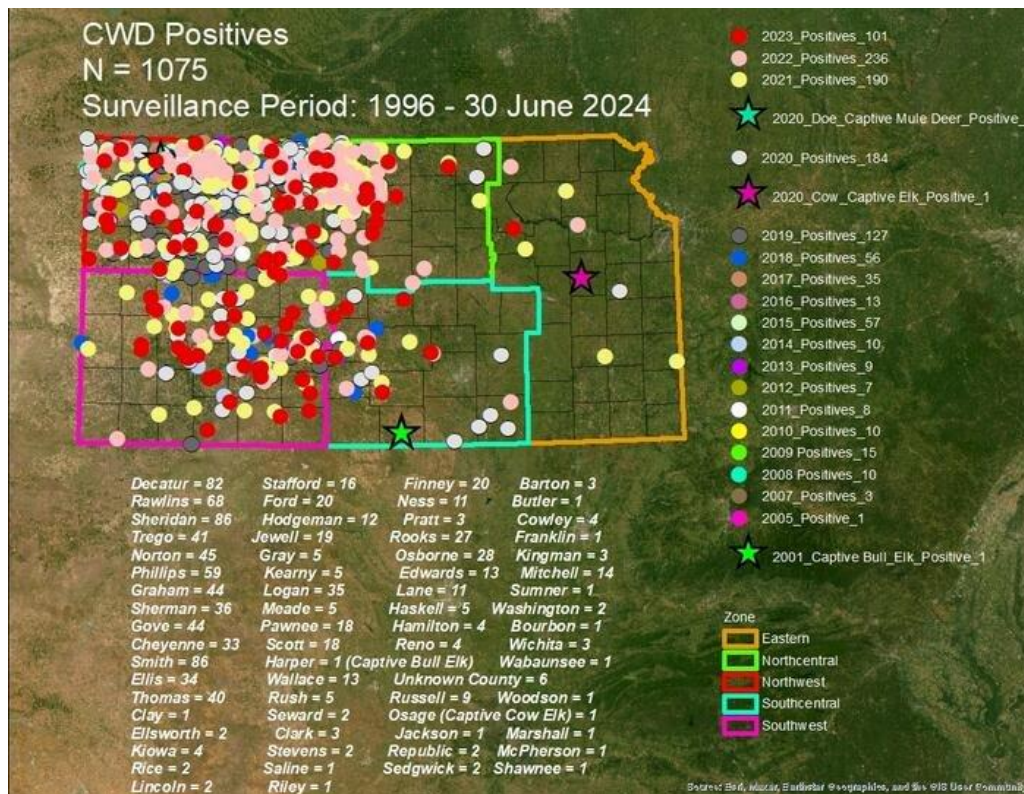
# Kansas after 2024, now over 1,200 cases

## First detection in the wild- 2005

## Baiting is legal and widely popular

**19 years with disease – 1,075 positives in the wild**

## Finding sick deer is relatively common



### South Dakota -First detection in the wild – 2001

## Baiting is not legal

**23 years with the disease – 438 wild deer and elk positives**

### Single digit prevalence outside of Wind Cave NP

**282 captive elk positive in Wind Cave NP)**

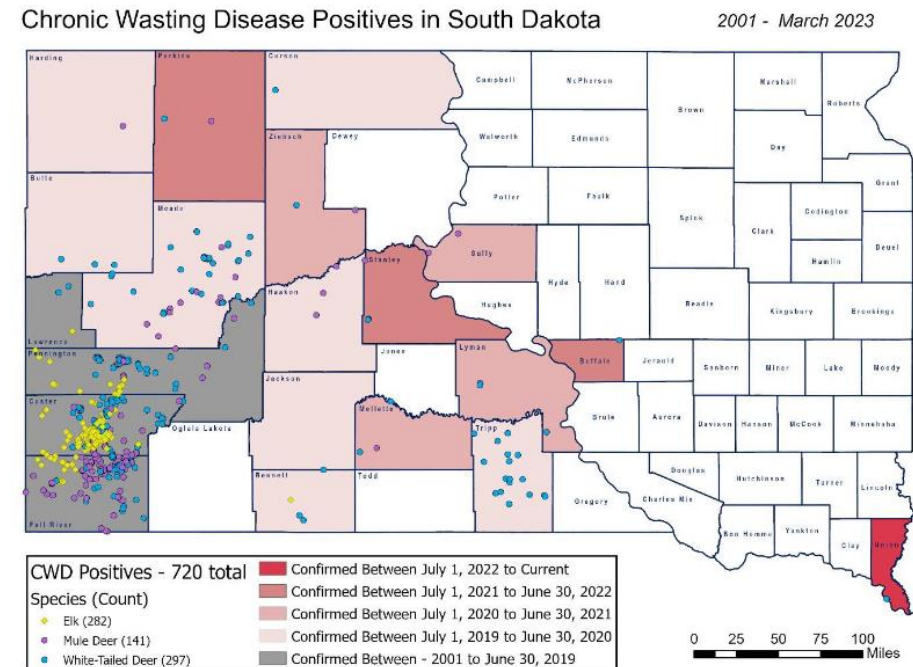
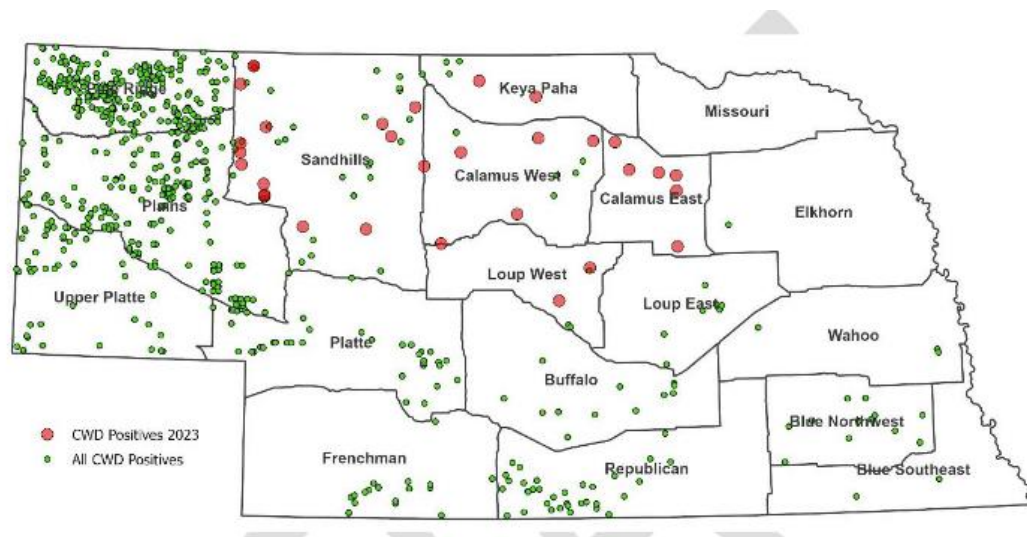


Figure 1. Locations of CWD infected free-ranging cervids in South Dakota, 2001-2023.

# Nebraska vs South Dakota

- CWD first discovered in 2000
- **Baiting allowed on Private Lands**
- **24 years** with disease
  - **1,269 positive** wild deer
  - **19 positive** elk



**First detection in the wild – 2001**

**No baiting**

**23 years** with the disease – **438 wild deer**  
**and elk positives**

**282 captive elk positive in Wind Cave NP**

Chronic Wasting Disease Positives in South Dakota

2001 - March 2023

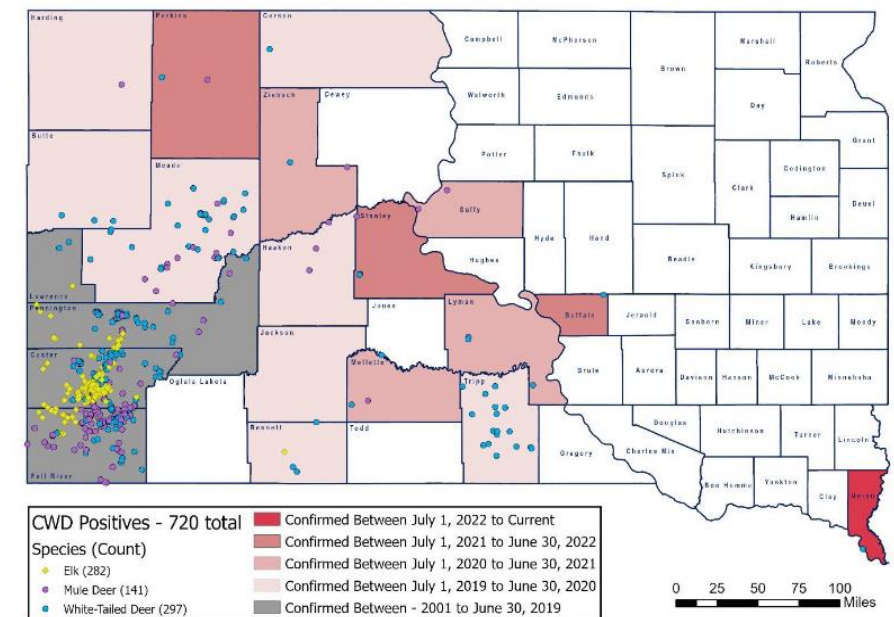


Figure 1. Locations of CWD infected free-ranging cervids in South Dakota, 2001-2023.

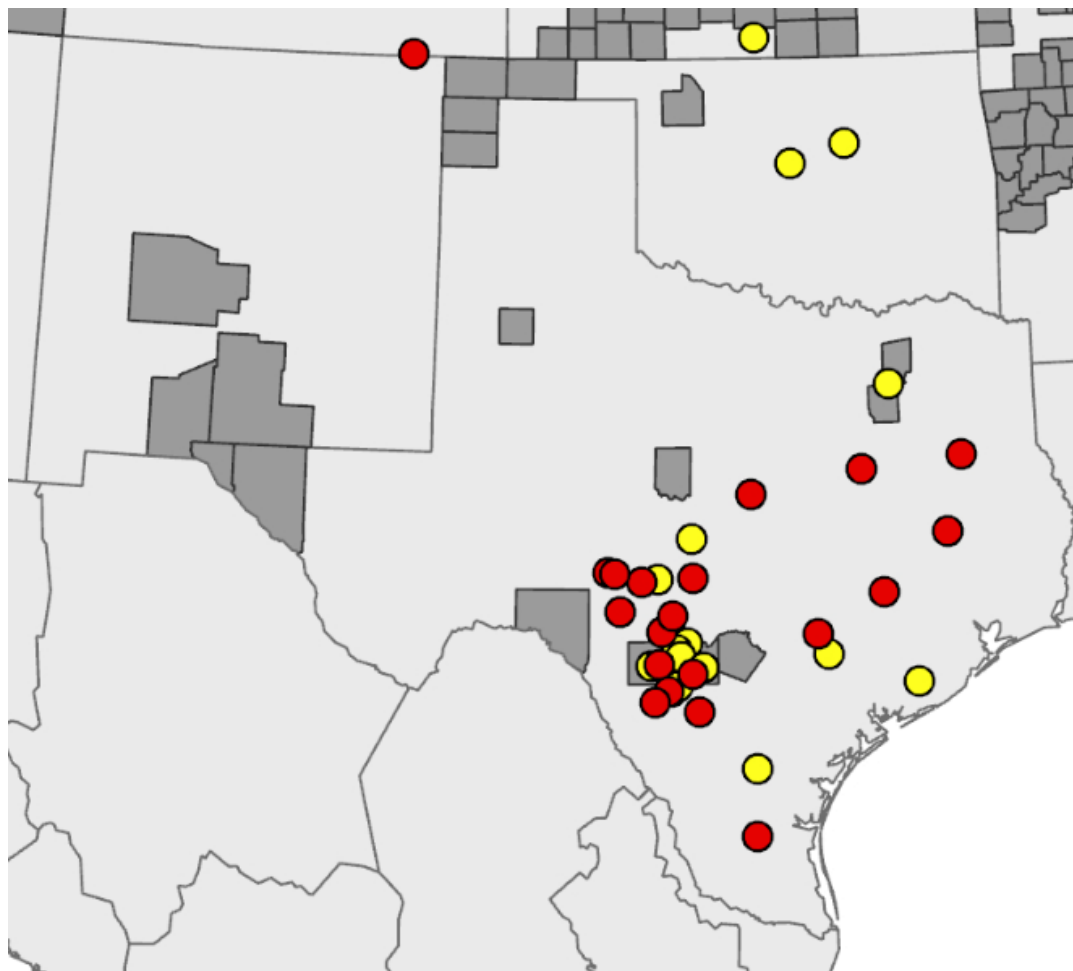
# Texas vs New Mexico

New Mexico – 2002 - 2023  
First detected in 2002

No baiting

TOTAL CWD+ = 59

Confined to 3 counties



Texas – 2012-2024  
First detected in 2012

TOTAL CWD positives =  
1,019 as of November 2024

Texas has blurred the lines  
with captive and wild deer.  
Captive deer can still be  
considered wild, and  
thousands of captive deer are  
"released" into the wild every  
year in Texas.

Significantly more  
Geographic Spread.

## Investments in fighting CWD and Winter Transmission

Biennium	License \$\$ Spent Landowner on depredation
----------	--

2009-11	\$1,068,000
---------	-------------

2011-13	\$851,000
---------	-----------

2013-15	\$253,000
---------	-----------

2015-17	\$276,935
---------	-----------

2017-19	\$689,339
---------	-----------

2019-21	\$471,910
---------	-----------

2021-23	\$699,528
---------	-----------

2023-25	\$1,761,269
---------	-------------

<b>Total \$</b>	<b>\$6,070,981 = 498 Hay yard projects from 2009 – Fall 2024</b>
-----------------	--

# Baiting Mule Deer

## Former Utah Wildlife Board member among 7 charged in illegal hunting scheme

By Carter Williams, KSL.com | Posted - Aug. 23, 2024 at 7:03 p.m.



Utah Wildlife Board member Wade Heaton, left, speaks during a meeting on Jan. 4, 2022. Heaton, who resigned from the board last year, faces 11 charges tied to an illegal baiting scheme, according to court documents. (Utah Department of Natural Resources)

### A Lucrative Hunting Business

Clients of Heaton's company told investigators they paid from \$3,000 to \$40,000 to hunt deer with his guides, often in Southern Utah's Paunsaugunt hunting unit. The clients were assigned specific deer to hunt, along with photos to recognize them. The targeted animals were also given nicknames by Heaton and his guides, including Belly Dump, Cialis, and Tokyo Drift.

Most importantly to investigators, Heaton worked with his guides to lure the deer to specific locations using corn feed, court documents said. They even cut down tree limbs to improve the line of sight from deer blinds. Investigators frequently cited WhatsApp text messages from Heaton as evidence of his intentions.

"Let's all carry 1-2 keylocks of feed and feed whatever we drive by," Heaton allegedly wrote in a text message from August 2023. "Put what you feed on this text."

### Former Utah Wildlife Official Charged in Illegal Hunting Scheme

Wade Heaton is one of seven men charged with baiting game animals, a practice Utah lawmakers made illegal in 2021.

Written by Andrew McLemore Aug 29, 2024 12:14 p.m. ET



Support us! GearJunkie may earn a small commission from affiliate links in this article. [Learn More](#)

A former member of the Utah Wildlife Board faces nearly a dozen charges for baiting game animals through his hunting guide business.

"A reminder of our decision about feed ... We are going to keep the hunters as removed from it as possible," according to a text from Heaton in August 2021. "No feeding with a hunter in the truck. Keeping the feed out of sight of the public."

Heaton did not respond to requests for comment.



Two close-up shots of trophy mule deer bucks that were posted to Color Country Outfitter's Facebook page in 2023. Photos via Facebook

# Baiting Mule Deer



## Baiting Mule Deer



Wildlife is managed for all of the people of North Dakota, for the PUBLIC GOOD.

Article XI Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution

**Section 27.** Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good.

ND Century Code

**20.1-01-03.** Ownership and control of wildlife is in the state - Damages - Schedule of monetary values - Civil penalty.

**The ownership of and title to all wildlife within this state is in the state for the purpose of regulating the enjoyment, use, possession, disposition, and conservation thereof, and for maintaining action for damages as herein provided.** Any person catching, killing, taking, trapping, or possessing any wildlife protected by law at any time or in any manner is deemed to have consented that the title thereto remains in this state for the purpose of regulating the taking, use, possession, and disposition thereof. The state, through the office of attorney general, may institute and maintain any action for damages against any person who unlawfully causes, or has caused within this state, the death, destruction, or injury of wildlife, except as may be authorized by law. **The state has a property interest in all protected wildlife.** This interest supports a civil action for damages for the unlawful destruction of wildlife by willful or grossly negligent act or omission.

ND Game and Fish Mission Statement

North Dakota Game and Fish Department

To protect, conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitat for sustained public use.

# Insight from Theodore Roosevelt

“Defenders of the short-sighted men who in their greed and selfishness will, if permitted, rob our country of half its charm by their reckless extermination of all useful and beautiful wild things, sometimes seek to champion them by saying the ‘the game belongs to the people.’ So, it does; and not merely to the people now alive, but to the unborn people. The ‘greatest good for the greatest number’ applies to the number within the womb of time, compared to which those now alive form but an insignificant fraction. Our duty to the whole, including the unborn generations, bids us restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations. The movement for the conservation of wild life and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose, and method.”





Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee  
Testimony on SB 2137

North Dakota Game and Fish Department  
Dr. Charlie Bahnson, Wildlife Veterinarian  
January 17, 2025

Chairman Luick and members of the Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee, my name is Dr. Charlie Bahnson. I serve as Wildlife Veterinarian for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department.

The question at hand is whether the authority to restrict hunting over supplemental feed should lie within the Governors proclamation. The Legislature has considered this question before. Bills in 2007 and 2009 would have banned baiting statewide, while a bill from last session would have stripped the ability to restrict it. All three bills failed, with the sentiment being that a wildlife disease issue should be left up to the state game and fish agency and the flexibility within the Governor's proclamation. Today, we revisit the topic.

As Wildlife Veterinarian, I'll argue that this is an important tool. One aspect of my job is to monitor wildlife diseases in our state. Some are well established. Epizootic hemorrhagic disease, highly pathogenic avian influenza, and chronic wasting disease are a few examples. We also keep our eye out for other diseases that may be in our wildlife but are yet to be recognized. That's important because some have implications not just for wildlife, but also people or livestock -- things like brucellosis or bovine tuberculosis. If either of those diseases were to become established in our wildlife populations, it would be devastating for our livestock industry because you'd have continued risk of spillover from one to the other, threatening export markets. This has occurred in other states. Given this possibility, we hope to identify potential issues early and intervene before they become well established in our wildlife. With any of these disease issues, proclamation allows us to manage with flexibility and responsiveness compared to if it is set in state statute.

The Game and Fish currently employs this tool in a portion of the state to combat a specific threat: chronic wasting disease. CWD is a fatal brain disease that affects deer, elk, and moose. It's currently rare in our state which means it's very tempting to write off. However, as infection rates climb - as a larger portion of your herd consists of these sick animals - the impact becomes larger, to a point where you can no longer ignore it. That means finding sick deer. That means producing fewer mature animals to hunt. This new cause of mortality will cut into the "harvestable surplus" meaning fewer licenses if we're trying to maintain population levels. In the most extreme situations, that cause of mortality can outpace the herd's ability to compensate, resulting in population declines. The tipping point at which these things will happen will vary. In some western herds, declines were documented at as low as 30% infection rates. From our work

with colleagues who manage western herds heavily infected with CWD, I can also share that the impacts are real – fewer deer, disappearance of older age classes, lots of calls to come euthanize sick, neurologic animals. We don't want this in North Dakota.

Now all of this is based off evidence in the form of peer reviewed science, the gold standard for understanding these sorts of phenomena. You'll see that reflected in the CWD management plan and baiting document included in your packets.

We're not dismissing how important baiting is to a lot of people. And as a lifelong hunter, I can understand why some are upset. If baiting has been a part of how you hunt for years, it's hard to imagine hunting without it. When I go into the field, I want as much leeway as possible to hunt in my preferred style. However, regulations are in place to protect the resource- the resource that we all share. It is in everyone's interest for the deer herd to be as healthy as possible- for the good of wildlife, people, and livestock in this state.

Ultimately, we do our best to navigate some sort of middle ground on this issue, balancing the wishes of those who enjoy hunting over bait with the fact that both research and past agency experience demonstrate that congregating deer adds voluntary disease risk. Navigating this middle ground opens us up to criticism from both sides. We take plenty of it, but that's our job. We ask that you allow us to keep doing it. The Governor is committed to managing this long-term disease with a commonsense approach. That requires the flexibility afforded through annual proclamation to address a changing, dynamic issue with a changing, dynamic approach. We ask you to vote no on this bill.

## 2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

### Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee

Fort Union Room, State Capitol

SB 2137

1/23/2025

A bill relating to the use of supplemental feed for hunting; and to provide an expiration date.

2:32 p.m. Chairman Luick opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Luick, Vice-Chair Myrdal, Senator Marcellais, Senator Weston, Senator Weber, Senator Lemm

#### Discussion Topics:

- Correlation between supplemental feeding, bating, and the increased spread of CWD
- Reduction in feeding and congregation
- Property rights
- Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) or Blue Tongue
- Four year sunset clause

2:38 p.m. Senator Lemm moved to adopt amendment LC# 25.0097.01001.

2:38 p.m. Senator Myrdal seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Larry Luick	Y
Senator Janne Myrdal	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Richard Marcellais	Y
Senator Mark F. Weber	Y
Senator Kent Weston	Y

Motion passed 6-0-0.

2:40 p.m. Senator Lemm moved a Do Pass As Amended.

2:40 p.m. Senator Myrdal seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Larry Luick	Y
Senator Janne Myrdal	Y
Senator Randy D. Lemm	Y
Senator Richard Marcellais	Y
Senator Mark F. Weber	N
Senator Kent Weston	Y

Motion passed 5-1-0

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee  
SB 2137  
1/23/25  
Page 2

Senator Lemm will carry the bill.

2:43 p.m. Chairman Luick closed the hearing.

*Audrey Oswald, Committee Clerk*

25.0097.01001  
Title.02000

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

Adopted by the Agriculture and  
Veterans Affairs Committee  
January 23, 2025

RS 1/23/25  
1 of 1

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

### SENATE BILL NO. 2137

Introduced by

Senators Boehm, Thomas, Patten

Representatives Koppelman, Novak, Tveit

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 20.1-05 of the North Dakota  
2 Century Code, relating to the use of supplemental feed for hunting; and to provide an expiration  
3 date.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 20.1-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is created  
6 and enacted as follows:

7 **Hunting big game animals using supplemental feed not prohibited or restricted.**

8 The department may not adopt a rule or implement a policy prohibiting or restricting the use  
9 of supplemental feed on private property for hunting a big game animal.

10 **SECTION 2. EXPIRATION DATE.** This Act is effective through July 31, 2029, and after that  
11 date is ineffective.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
SB 2137**

**Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee (Sen. Luick, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.0097.01001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (5 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2137 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

**2025 HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**SB 2137**

# 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

## Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2137

3/7/2025

Relating to the use of supplemental feed for hunting; and to provide an expiration date.
--

9:28 a.m. Chairman Porter opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Porter, Vice Chairman Anderson, Vice Chair Novak,  
Representatives: Dockter, Hagert, Headland, Heinert, Johnson, Marschall, Olson, Ruby,  
Conmy, Foss

### Discussion Topics:

- Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)
- Bait piles
- Crops
- Hunting etiquette
- Property rights

9:28 a.m. Senator Keith Boehm, North Dakota Senator for District 33, introduced the bill and provided testimony #39533.

9:35 a.m. Daryl Lies, President of the North Dakota Farm Bureau, testified in favor.

9:46 a.m. Wyatt Thompson, North Dakota Resident and landowner, testified in favor and provided testimony #39381, #39538.

9:55 a.m. Christopher Jorde, North Dakota Resident, testified in favor and provided testimony #39118.

10:00 a.m. Matt Seykora, North Dakota Resident, testified in favor and provided testimony #39338.

10:03 a.m. Gabe Thompson, North Dakota Resident, testified in favor and provided testimony #39247.

10:08 a.m. Andy Buntrock, North Dakota Resident, testified in favor and provided testimony #39454.

10:15 a.m. Jade Koski, North Dakota Stockman's Association, testified in favor.

10:16 a.m. Jeff Willock, North Dakota Resident, testified in favor.

10:19 a.m. Phil Mastrangelo, North Dakota Wildlife Society, testified in opposition and provided testimony #39510.

10:25 a.m. William Baer, North Dakota Resident, testified in opposition.

10:29 a.m. Mark Anderson, North Dakota Resident, testified in opposition and provided testimony #39468.

10:34 a.m. Brock Wahl, Chairman of the North Dakota Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, testified in opposition and provided testimony #39423.

10:47 a.m. Patricia Stockdill, North Dakota Resident, testified in opposition and provided testimony #39560.

10:57 a.m. Bill Mitzel, North Dakota Resident, testified in opposition and provided testimony #39563.

11:01 a.m. Dr. Charlie Bahnson, Wildlife Veterinarian for North Dakota Game and Fish, testified in opposition and provided testimony #39376.

**Additional written testimony:**

**In Favor:**

#38465, #38466, #38484, #38485, #38488, #38500, #38507, #38520, #38528, #38529, #38530, #38531, #38532, #38533, #38534, #38535, #38536, #38538, #38542, #38544, #38546, #38547, #38553, #38558, #38595, #38596, #38600, #38601, #38602, #38603, #38606, #38615, #38629, #38704, #38799, #38814, #38820, #38930, #38932, #38933, #38935, #38937, #38938, #38946, #38962, #38968, #38973, #38974, #38977, #38979, #38982, #38990, #39001, #39015, #39025, #39027, #39030, #39032, #39048, #39053, #39054, #39064, #39076, #39079, #39084, #39096, #39101, #39128, #39157, #39161, #39174, #39176, #39180, #39197, #39229, #39262, #39275, #39276, #39280, #39290, #39291, #39293, #39295, #39296, #39304, #39321, #39343, #39353, #39366, #39377, #39378, #39404, #39419, #39427, #39431, #39433, #39442, #39464, #39465, #39479, #39509, #39512

**In Opposition:**

#38499, #38514, #38522, #38545, #38567, #38579, #38580, #38581, #38587, #38597, #38628, #38646, #38647, #38649, #38651, #38823, #38835, #38925, #38926, #38959, #38965, #38978, #38987, #39002, #39021, #39077, #39167, #39185, #39189, #39192, #39292, #39360, #39371, #39374, #39382, #39393, #39396, #39402, #39412, #39413, #39418, #39420, #39421, #39425, #39426, #39437, #39447, #39449, #39451, #39452, #39456, #39458, #39472, #39482, #39511, #39514, #39584, #39586, #39434, #39486, #39394, #39429, #39462, #39492

11:06 a.m. Chairman Porter closed the hearing.

*Addison Randazzo for Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*

My name is Travis Martinson and I fully support SB2137. I have been a resident of ND for 15 years and a current landowner. I have college education in biology, criminal justice, and taxidermy. I have completed a 1000-hour internship with the Minnesota DNR Enforcement Division. I have been a hunter my entire life. CWD is not the problem agencies are claiming it to be. EHD is the true killer. Placing supplemental feed will benefit the deer's nutritional needs all while allowing hunters to make more ethical shot placement. Game and Fish should be placing supplemental feed during the winter where it's needed to help our deer. I would be glad to hear that's where my tax, and license money is going. We should not be culling herds for a very rare disease. I would greatly appreciate it if Game and Fish would focus on EHD and winter herd management. Please pass SB2137. Listen to the sportsman.

Thank you!

Dear Committee,

My name is Tierney Martinson and I fully support SB2137. I am the mother of two young boys who love to hunt. I would like them to have the opportunity to archery hunt over supplemental feed. This will help them make a better shot at a closer range. This will also give them an opportunity to watch the deer up close. As a landowner and hunter myself I have done my research on the CWD narrative and have not seen any evidence to show that it is a true problem. Please allow hunting over supplemental feed on private land.

Sincerely, Tierney Martinson

I am asking that you please vote yes on SB 2137. Over the last 20 plus years there have been over 40,000 deer tested in ND and only 130 detections (less the 1% of the deer tested) and all them deer were killed by hunters not CWD. The North Dakota game and fish has killed more deer than CWD has when they slaughtered over 40 deer just to test (all came back negative) and they also wasted all the meat instead of donating it when they did that. Deer are constantly coming in contact with each in the wild weather its at feed or just naturally browsing, licking each other to help each other clean themselves, or during the breeding season when the bucks and doe are all sharing bodily fluids urine and more. At scrapes and licking branches all deer in the area visit them and make nose contact and urinate at them spots just to see who is all in the area. The numbers don't back up the NDGF claim of how contagious or deadly it is. If it was truly as contagious and deadly as they claim the deer herd should be wiped out by now. EHD and hard winters are the real killers of deer in ND. I feel NDGF should quit focusing on CWD and turn there attention to them 2 things if they actually care about "protecting the herd"

Thanks for your time

Yes on SB 2137

Trent Schatz

My name is Dean Torfin as a life long ND resident and landowner/hunter,trapper,fishermen and outdoorsman i support SB 2137. As a landowner and hunter I feel I should be able to feed the deer and hunt over it if I want instead of not being able to feed the deer and watch over half of the deer die because of starvation on my land. Deer naturally herd up and congregate weather it be at feed piles or hay and feed yards. ND has lost way more deer to starvation during harsh winters and EHD during dry summers yet no attention is focused on that instead NDGF has spent over 900,000 dollars of license fees on testing and trying to convince ND residents Cwd is fatal which it is not in most cases. ND has been testing deer for over 20 years and only one deer has actually been found dead that had a detection of CWD all the rest of the deer that had a detection were killed by hunters. (Less then 1 percent of deer tested have been detected of CWD). NDGF has put 1.5 million dollars into trying to get us to think this is a fatal disease all the while only 1 deer has been found dead from it. And I emphasize 1.5 million dollars over 1 deer lets use common sense and pass SB2137

Thank you

Dean Torfin

It's time to return common sense to hunting over bait in ND. Currently, you can place feed 24/7, 365 days a year - if you aren't hunting over it. It makes no sense to create a hindrance for hunters who want to use bait.

SB 2137

If only deer could talk?

In all of this legislation the only perspective not being heard is the wildlife. As legislators your duty is to give a voice to our wildlife. Protect our state's resource, that is your duty as a trust protector of ND. You need to protect wildlife today, tomorrow and for 100 years. Ask yourself who benefits from the passing or not passing of this bill? All these hunters prefer to hunt over bait and that is a big change for them when they can't, I respect that. Does the ND Game and Fish benefit from the status quo, no. They win when our state wildlife win. Hunters who support this bill will win if you pass this bill and they will be able to hunt over bait, but wildlife in North Dakota will win if you allow the ND Game and Fish to manage our resources. Let our deer win.

Supporters of this bill use the words PRIVATE LAND a lot. We have lots of restrictions on private land. I live in the city and need to keep my lawn mowed. I can't pile up junk and need to be respectful of my neighbors. I can't make or sell drugs on my private land. We even have laws regarding managing water on private land.

The wildlife in our state belongs to North Dakota, not landowners. Yes, landowners are a great asset to hunters, and they benefit from being landowners by getting gratis tags to hunt deer, moose, elk and antelope.

I also understand that the NO BAITING is unfair, you can bait on one side of the highway but not the other. I would rather make baiting illegal for all of North Dakota then take away a tool being used to protect deer in North Dakota.

Who benefits? Who wins? This is the question we need to answer.

**I would like to see the baiting restrictions for hunting during deer season removed. The NDGF is not following their own science in supporting their claims. Makes no sense to keep on with their CWD narrative. The money they spend to broadcast their false claims could be used to supplement feed the deer in the harsh winter months. Time to pull the reigns in on the NDGF.**

**Sincerely**

**David A Lunde**

Written Testimony in support of SB 2137

2-28-25

As a Sportsman, Resident, and Landowner, I fully support SB 2137. Right now, in many units across the state supplemental feed can be placed anywhere, at any time of the year, in any amount, and someone can sit by it with a camera while deer and other wildlife eat with no worries about disease or CWD being spread. But according to the NDGF, the second they put the camera down and grab a gun or bow, the CWD threat magically appears and is an “endemic”. How? The opposition to SB 2137 will say we need to trust the “science”, but the NDGF doesn’t, or can’t, prove their own science and even go against it at times. The real threats to the ND deer populations are EHD, and winter starvation, NDGF even recognized this at one of the advisory meetings. Yet so much of their time, energy, and our money is focused on the CWD farse and placing of supplemental feed in the form of a Hunting Restriction.

As a private landowner and taxpayer in the state, I would like to be able to continue to help the deer herd, as well as other wildlife, by placing supplemental feed, and do so with no restrictions regardless of if I am hunting near it or not.

I ask for you to vote **YES** and pass SB 2137.

Thank you.

John Lien

2137 opposition:

I am testifying in opposition of bill 2137. This bill goes against the North American Conservation Model and threatens the future of deer in North Dakota. There is evidence that shows that CWD transmission is higher in areas of high deer density. Baiting increases deer density and negatively impacts the deer herd.

Jeremy Stahowiak

3-1-2025

Attn: North Dakota State Legislature Committee Members

Subject – In support of SB 2137

Hello Committee Members, my name is Lance Straabe and I fully support SB 2137. This bill is simple and guarantees the rights of hunters. It's not about feeding wildlife. In 2009 the state already passed a bill to feed wildlife border to border. It is about being able to hunt where that feed is. This issue keeps gaining support session after session and it's time the legislature steps up and votes it into law. If you don't it will be back next year with more support. The issue is between the people and NDGF and you represent the people. Don't forget that.

Lance Straabe

Hope ND

I am writing in opposition to SB 2137. Put simply, managing our state's wildlife should be done by the Game and Fish Department, not by voters at the ballot box. This also sets a very dangerous precedent for the future. Please vote no on SB 2137 and allow the Game and Fish Department to manage the state's wildlife in the way that they see best fit.

Respectfully,

Vince Gray  
Bismarck

I am in favor of SB 2137 and ask that this hunting restriction bill gets passed without any ammendments keep it simple.

I am asking that SB 2137 gets a DO pass recommendation without any ammendments attached and the rest of the house to vote Green. Thank you

I am in favor of SB 2137 and ask that you please vote yes on this easy to understand bill and dont make it confusing by adding wording to it.

Thanks

I am in favor of SB2137 and ask the committee for a do pass recommendation and ask that the rest of the house please vote yes when it comes to the floor.

I am in favor of SB 2137 please vote yes

Please vote yes on Sb 2137 and get rid of the hunting restrictions the entire state can place any amount of feed anywhere at anytime already we just can't pull a trigger over it.

As a rancher I see deer herd up naturally in my feed and hay yard with way more deer congregating there than over any feed pile used for hunting I encourage the house to pass SB 2137.

Pass SB 2137 without any confusing ammendments attached keep this bill simple and end these hunting restrictions.  
Thank you

I am in favor of SB 2137

Vote yes on SB 2137

As a lifelong outdoor enthusiasts that likes to spend as much time as I can hunting and fishing and making many memories doing so. Many of the memories being with my dad whose eyesight isn't what it used to be and can probably only make a 30 yard shot. Without the use of feed I may not be able to continue to make these memories with him. That being said I urge the committee members to make a recommendation of a DO PASS on Sb2137

January 10, 2025

TO: Senate Agriculture and Veteran Affairs

RE: SB 2137

**IN SUPPORT**

I am in support of SB 2137. Supplemental feed has been an important part of maintaining healthy deer herds through harsh winters. In the case of hunting over feed I am also in favor. If the spread of CWD is not caused by feeding deer, the presence of a hunter over that feed will not cause the spread of CWD either.

Macauley Haag

**SB 2137**

North Dakota House Energy and Natural Resource Committee

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Darrell Belisle and I am from Turtle Lake, ND. I am writing to you on my own behalf as a lifelong North Dakota Sportsman and Bowhunter. I shot my first arrows in the 1960's, harvested my first deer, with those arrows, in the 1970's and have enjoyed a successful life as a Bowhunter ever since those early years, a long time ago.

The language of SB 2137, "The Baiting Bill", seems to contain 3 areas of interest. These concerns are Chronic Wasting disease, Private Property Rights, and the use of Supplemental Feed. I'll try to offer my opinion and a follow up suggestion with the below.

**Chronic Wasting Disease**

This topic seems to be the main concern of the bill. It concerns whether or not the North Dakota Game and Fish Dept. has any validity in their efforts concerning the management of Wildlife diseases.

- ***Is Chronic Wasting Disease real?***
  - Yes, it is very real and well documented throughout our country and the world.
- ***Is Chronic wasting Disease a threat to the future of hunting In North Dakota?***
  - I believe it could certainly be a threat to the hunting opportunities of our future generations.
- ***Is the Game and Fish Dept. effectively managing this wildlife disease?***
  - I believe they are using the best practices available. It is always better to be proactive and work to control a wildlife disease rather than let a problem grow until it is far beyond control.

**Private Property Rights**

- Are the practices of wildlife disease management an issue which should concern North Dakota private property rights?
  - No, I certainly respect North Dakota private property rights, however I do not believe the management of a wildlife disease is an issue concerning private property rights.

**Supplemental feed**

Supplemental feed is the main issue in this bill. How does placing supplemental feed concern wildlife disease management practices? When can I hunt over bait?

- ***What is the problem with hunting big game over bait in North Dakota?***
  - I believe in the management practice of controlling the “human component” of gathering big game to a close contact situation. In nature, there are many situations we cannot control, but we can control those things we create ourselves.
- ***I can place supplemental feed year around, I just can't hunt over it.***
  - This is a valid point. Control on the placement of supplemental feed certainly needs to be addressed.

### **In Summary**

Do we simply ignore the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's approach to managing a wildlife disease and just take a wait and see approach? Do we ignore wildlife disease management with the cloak of private property rights?

The early years of my Bowhunting life are long gone. Those opportunities can never be recreated. But we can look out for those hunters 30, 40, 50 years from now. Maybe our own grandchildren. We need to find workable solutions which will benefit our future generations.

We shouldn't undermine the Game and Fish Departments experts and their management plans. We should not threaten the future of big game hunting with private property right issues. However, I would encourage you to resolve the issue of supplemental feed. Using supplemental feed to attract and gather big game animals is something that could and should be addressed.

**I would encourage you to oppose SB 2137**

Sincerely,

Darrell Belisle

Turtle Lake, ND

The entire state **can** feed wildlife any  
location, any time, any amount.

SB 2137 is about being able to **hunt** over  
the feed, that we can already place  
*anywhere, any amount, and any time*, in  
restricted units.

SB 2137 is about being able to **pull a  
trigger** when big game is around feed that  
we can place *any time, any where, and any  
amount*.

SB2137 is not about placing feed.  
SB 2137 is about **hunting**.

I fully support passing SB-2137. The amount of time money and energy wasted on CWD is becoming an insult to all taxpayers and citizens of ND. Considering only 1 deer has died from CWD in the last 50 years and there is little to no evidence of bait spreading cwd, banning it for hunting purposes only is nothing more than a government control attempt in the private property of the citizens of ND. We watch as thousands of deer perish every year in ND due to harsh winters and EHD yet nothing is done about either by our wildlife officials yet they aim to restrict what private citizens can do on their own property. Please recommend a do-pass for SB-2137. Thank you

Jeremy Dinius.

I am a lifelong hunter and outdoorsman. I spend a lot of time in the field taking others hunting, working on habitat projects and planting food plots. The last 5 years I have been one of the coordinators for hunts with Prairie Grit Adaptive Sports in Minot. We work to provide hunting opportunities for people with disabilities. I am writing you because the current NDG&F rules on baiting have adversely affected our program. I have always supported the NDG&F as much as possible but their logic and rules on baiting do not seem logical to me and do not seem to be based in science.

The NDG&F position is that the rules on baiting are designed to reduce the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). The theory is that baiting brings deer into close proximity to one another which will expedite the spread of CWD. I do not believe that this theory is supported by science and logic under the current baiting restrictions.

Does banning baiting for deer hunting by individuals, on private land, increase the amount of close contact in whitetail deer:

- The law specifically bans baiting on private property for the purpose of hunting big game. It is still legal to:
  - o Put out feed for hunting turkeys. Deer and turkeys eat many of the same things so deer are eating this feed.
  - o Put out feed for the purpose of photography or watching wildlife, including big game.
  - o Put out feed just for the purpose of feeding wildlife.
  
- Deer in North Dakota naturally group up in the winter so our deer herd will come into close proximity regardless of baiting.
  - o I fed deer at my house before it was banned in my unit. I estimate that 20-30 deer used the feeder at my house for 3-4 months during the fall archery season. There is a feedlot 1.2 miles from my house. In the winter months there will be 100-200 deer feeding and bedding in the silage and haystacks. The 20-30 deer that may have come into close proximity at my house are part of a much larger herd that will spend 2-3 months in close proximity at this feedlot. This seems to make the effect of my feeder at promoting the spread of CWD mostly insignificant.
  - o I can't feed deer at my house for the purpose of hunting big game because it will spread disease, but my neighbor, 1/4 mile away, can feed deer and other wildlife for viewing. Once again this seems to make the effect of my feeder at promoting the spread of CWD mostly insignificant.
  - o Deer are naturally social animals, particularly during the fall breeding season. They mark their territory by making scrapes on the ground and using a "licking branch" above the scrape. A licking branch is a low hanging limb that deer rub their faces on to leave their scent. On one evening this fall I sat in a blind overlooking a food plot that had a scrape and licking branch. Over a time span of approximately 2 hours, I watched 8 deer feed through the plot, 3 young bucks, 1 doe with 1 fawn and 1 doe with 2 fawns. Of these 8 deer 6 used the licking branch. The 2 that didn't use the licking branch were fawns that were later groomed by their mothers who had. The potential of disease spread would be approximately 100%. These 8 deer are most likely spending the winter at the feed lot.

- NDG&F permits what is called intercept or preemptive feeding. This is done in cases where livestock feed supplies, silage and hay, are being damaged by wildlife. In these cases, feed is placed away from the farmyard, usually on travel routes that wildlife use to get to the farmyard. This is done to reduce the amount of wildlife damage to livestock feed supplies. At Advisory Meetings the NDG&F was asked if this practice would be stopped to reduce wildlife coming into close proximity of one another, thus increasing the spread of CWD. The response from NDG&F was that the practice would continue because they believe these animals would come into contact with one another anyway. This is the same argument that we have stated to them repeatedly. Small amounts of feed for hunting is not going to create more contact for wildlife because they are most likely going to come into contact anyway.

The rules that NDG&F have implemented to ban baiting in certain units do not affect everyone fairly/equally:

- In those areas where a banned unit borders a non-banned unit situations are created where one hunter can bait and another can not. If your neighbor across the road is permitted to put out feed but you are not, then you are at a major disadvantage.
  
- There are areas where there is a high percentage of success when hunting without bait. Those properties that have wooded areas, river or creek bottoms and coulees with good cover are some great areas to hunt. Those areas are not plentiful in North Dakota and are highly sought-after hunting locations. Getting permission to hunt those locations is difficult. Those hunters that can't get permission to hunt on prime property are left to trying to hunt on open cropland,

pastures, CRP and sloughs. Without bait the probability of success in these areas is small.

- Planting food plots is permitted and a great way to bring more wildlife into your hunting area. This is not a practice that is available to most hunters. Planting food plots requires owning property or having access to property that the landowner will allow the planting of food plots. It also requires owning or borrowing the equipment needed to prepare, plant and take care of the crop. Successful food plots also require a commitment of time and money that makes it unrealistic for most hunters.

- The restrictions on baiting have caused more hunters to use public hunting areas like refuges, national grasslands and other wildlife management areas. This has caused increased hunting pressure in these areas for wildlife. It has also caused more issues between hunters in the field.

- While banning baiting can affect all hunters it disproportionality affects those that are disabled, older hunters and younger hunters.

- o Hunting for disabled hunters presents physical challenges. Hunting blinds usually have to be established in advance to make sure that conditions will allow access. In most cases getting to the areas with heavy cover that are preferred for hunting is not an option. Disabled hunters usually do not get to choose the best location for their hunt. They must choose the best location that can be made accessible. Chances for success at these locations can be very limited without the use of bait. "We can't go to the deer. We have to get them to come to us."

- o Hunters that are confined to a wheelchair are less mobile in the blind as well. Moving a wheelchair from one shooting window to another without spooking deer is a challenge. For this reason, most disabled setups are designed with one primary shooting window. If the deer don't come within range of that window then success is unlikely.

- o Mobility can also be an issue for older hunters. As we age the ability to hike long distances or over rough terrain decreases. For those hunters an established hunting blind with feed placed nearby may be the only option for a successful hunt.

- o Mobility can also be an issue for those that are trying to get kids involved in hunting. Small children would struggle with hiking long distances or over rough terrain.

- o For those trying to get kids involved in hunting the key is keeping their interest. Most kids are going to lose interest quickly if they are not seeing wildlife. Placing feed nearby increases the odds of seeing deer and other game. It creates a great learning situation when wildlife can be observed and discussed.

Thank you for taking time to read this. I would welcome the opportunity to visit with you personally if you have questions about any of the issues that I have addressed. Please vote "Yes" on SB 2137.

D.J. Randolph

701-720-2134

4562 Valley Road

Velva, ND 58790

snoop@srt.com

March 2, 2025

House ENR Committee:  
RE: SB 2137- In support

House ENR Committee:

SB 2137 reads:

*Hunting big game animals using supplemental feed, not prohibited or restricted (on private property with a 4 year sunset)*

With the key word being **HUNTING**. This bill is returning, the people, their right to HUNT. SB 2137 is just that simple. The people are not being allowed to hunt around the feed that they are permitted to put down.

A bit of history behind this Bill is important to be aware of. In 2005, there were discussions in the ND Game and Fish Agency of banning the feeding of wildlife. 2009 Legislation brought a Bill that would do just that. A variety of North Dakotans came to the capitol to unite and speak up against this Bill. There were bird watchers, backyard enthusiasts, small parcel owners, sportsmen, and landowners of all sizes that were passionate about the feeding of the states wildlife. At the conclusion of the Bill's journey to failing, NDGF Director Terry Steinwand, commented that the Bill caused tremendous division with the people and the department, and that the department would never attempt this kind of restriction again.

The people can feed wildlife anywhere, any time and at any amount, no matter what restrictions have been imposed.

Here we are in 2025, and the restriction has turned towards hunting. There are 28 units that should be restricted in 2025. That is 28 areas that could receive citations for hunting around feed that they can legally place anytime of the year, any location, and at any amount.

The People are asking for the right to hunt to be returned. If you look back at the simply written Bill, it is about HUNTING, not feed. This bill is not about timing of feed. This bill is not about a distance of feed. This bill is not about an amount of feed. The 2009 People secured the topic of feed.

If you are concerned about an "outbreak" and authority, the NDGF has the overall authority, in an emergency, along with ND Board of Animal Health, and the Governor, to make changes as needed.

I invite you to vote a DO PASS on the existing bill that is in front of you. It is simple, concise, and what the people want. There are no additional amendments that would make sense so, let's keep it clean and lead it to the House floor on its merits.

Respectfully,

Dusty Backer

Experts within the NDGFD need to manage our wildlife resources, including Chronic Wasting Disease and its implications to our deer populations. CWD cannot be managed by legislators or their constituents.

Experts are needed to control deer populations. Do not restrict the experts from doing so. They are experts for a reason.

**SB 2137**

North Dakota House Energy and Natural Resource Committee

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Darrell Belisle and I am from Turtle Lake, ND. I am writing to you on my own behalf as a lifelong North Dakota Sportsman and Bowhunter. I shot my first arrows in the 1960's, harvested my first deer, with those arrows, in the 1970's and have enjoyed a successful life as a Bowhunter ever since those early years, a long time ago.

The language of SB 2137, "The Baiting Bill", seems to contain 3 areas of interest. These concerns are Chronic Wasting disease, Private Property Rights, and the use of Supplemental Feed. I'll try to offer my opinion and a follow up suggestion with the below.

**Chronic Wasting Disease**

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### **In Summary**

Do we simply ignore the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's approach to managing a wildlife disease and just take a wait and see approach? Do we ignore wildlife disease management with the cloak of private property rights?

The early years of my Bowhunting life are long gone. Those opportunities can never be recreated. But we can look out for those hunters 30, 40, 50 years from now. Maybe our own grandchildren. We need to find workable solutions which will benefit our future generations.

We shouldn't undermine the Game and Fish Departments experts and their management plans. We should not threaten the future of big game hunting with private property right issues. However, I would encourage you to resolve the issue of supplemental feed. Using supplemental feed to attract and gather big game animals is something that could and should be addressed.

**I would encourage you to oppose SB 2137**

Sincerely,

Darrell Belisle

Turtle Lake, ND

**January 16, 2025**

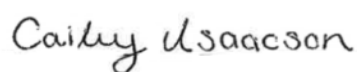
**RE: Senate Bill 2137 – Use of Supplemental Feed for Hunting**

Members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee,

I am writing to oppose Senate Bill 2137 (SB2137) that would strip the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF) of their ability to promulgate certain rules regarding hunting. Two of the seven tenants of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation are the Public Trust Doctrine and scientific management. Wildlife belongs to the public and is managed by government agencies on behalf of all citizens and managed based on the best available scientific research and findings. By approving SB 2137 we would be taking away the North Dakota Game and Fish Department to effectively manage deer populations for all citizens of North Dakota.

As highlighted in many of these “In Opposition” testimonials, approving SB 2137 sets a dangerous precedent for the future of wildlife and hunting management in the state of North Dakota. As a lifelong deer hunter myself, there is nothing I want more than sustainable deer populations and hunting opportunities now and in the future. Senate Bill 2137 would reduce NDGF’s decision making ability, flexibility, and effective management if approved. I respectfully ask you all to oppose Senate Bill 2137 and allow the North Dakota Game and Fish Department to continue in their mission to protect, conserve, and improve deer populations and ensure that these resources are available for public use in the long term.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cailey Isaacson".

Cailey Isaacson

## Testimony - SB 2137

I strongly oppose SB 2137. The allowing of baiting, and banning of baiting restrictions, will severely impact our deer populations. Chronic wasting disease and many other pathogens are quickly spread through groupings of deer. These diseases, which are already widespread in our state, will only be made worse through human-created supplemental feedings.

Management of these populations is critical in their health and ours. Baiting restrictions and bans are for the safety of all, and allow for our agencies to properly and wholly manage our populations. For the health and longevity of our deer, please vote in opposition to SB 2137.

## House Energy and Natural Resources Public Hearing

### Testimony on SB 2137

March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025

Members of the North Dakota House of Legislature, my name is Ethan Baker. I am voicing my opposition to Senate Bill 2137 that would remove authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF) to restrict hunting over supplemental feed. This would take away one of their tools to manage disease in the state.

Currently NDGF uses the restriction of baiting to limit chronic wasting disease (CWD) spread across North Dakota (ND). CWD is a fatal brain disease that affects deer, moose, and elk. Across other states throughout the United States there has already been documentation and peer reviewed research showing significant deer population declines due to CWD. In ND, with help from NDGF management actions CWD spread has been limited since its discovery within the state. While this is positive for the ND deer population, removing tools for NDGF such as baiting restrictions impairs their ability to limit CWD spread. An increase in CWD within ND could destroy all the work that has already been done by NDGF, and lead to those significant deer population declines identified in other states.

I am originally from Nebraska, and like North Dakota we also have multiple species of deer that can be impacted by CWD. Across both these states deer play a crucial role for recreational opportunity. Midwestern people love viewing deer in their habitat and being able to hunt them during season. Without the correct management of diseases, we risk consistent deer declines that will harm the public's ability to observe deer in the wild and harm the public's hunting potential across ND.

Finally, I wanted to end on the point that while current management using baiting restrictions revolves around CWD management, Senate Bill 2137 extends past this and would take away NDGF's ability to restrict baiting for any disease. In this constantly evolving world, this would severely hamper any efforts by the department to limit any disease outbreaks that happen in the future where they need to limit the dispersal of pathogens. I ask that you to vote no on Senate Bill 2137 to allow NDGF to follow their mission of protect, conserve, and improve deer populations so that deer populations remain healthy for future public recreational opportunity.

Thanks for your time,

*Ethan Baker*

Ethan Baker

3/05/25

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
RE: SB 2137

## IN SUPPORT OF

One cannot understand CWD without reviewing the background of a presumed “science” lineage. CWD is why the people in the hunting restricted units, are not allowed to take big game when around feed. Feed, that the entire state can place anytime, any location, any amount, even in the restricted units. Labeling this hunting restriction a “tool” against CWD is faulty. That would be saying that hunting spreads CWD.

CWD narrative lineage:

It starts with Kuru. Kuru is supposed to be caused by cannibalism in New Guinea. It was out of respect for the deceased, people ate the corpse. Daniel Gajdusek (who was later charged with child molestation) worked with Kuru and no one was able to confirm his findings, and some say the pictures of his work resembled pork and was a hoax.

Gajdusek had a theory that Kuru was a “slow moving” infectious condition and attempted to prove this by performing experiments and transmission of the disease. He drilled holes into chimpanzee head and placed pureed brain matter. He then said these animals developed symptoms of Kuru and therefore, the first demonstration of infectious spread of a neurodegenerative disease. He further coined Kuru as an “unconventional virus” with a long incubation period that does not cause an immune response (symptoms) from the host. This would mean to detect a disease, we take a test and don’t look at symptoms/immune response. Sounds awfully similar to CWD, now doesn’t it? Same types of experiments to prove contagious and long incubation period.

This was the beginning of the unsubstantiated idea of a slowing moving infectious condition.

Stanley Prusnier became involved in the 1980s and liked Gajdusek’s theory and argued that the definition of a virus should be changed. The definition of a virus is:

*The basic concept of an infectious microbe incorporates  
the assumption that it is genetically alien to the host it invades.*

In simple terms, anything infectious is foreign to the body.

Prusnier speculated instead, that this new agent could be a host protein and one of the normal molecules found in healthy brains, would become a mutated brain cell. He said that the infectious proteins would have to be a chemically altered form of a normal protein. This was a preposterous proposal and many virologist did not support this way of thinking because in this example, proteins are a naturally vital part of the bodily system. What would this chemical that is altering forms be?

With enough Human Dimensions, this theory has been accepted, even although there are no pictures for proof, of this mutant protein. The idea that slow virus (18-24 months) are a thing and prion are a thing, even though they have not been proven, (Prion Hypothesis) is a Human Dimension conception. (Virus is 2 days-2 weeks for symptoms)

Let’s return to the infectious (contagious) proving methods that were used with Kuru and how similar they are to the current studies that the Agencies grasp to with CWD. Brain matter

mushed up and injected into drilled holes in the head of chimps in direct comparison to the deer contagious studies of taking "infected" brain matter and shoving it into a healthy deer's brain, nose, and mouth.

Another study that is accepted by "robust science," is to put a deer under light anesthesia, wake the deer up enough to drink "infected" saliva, every week, for 3 months. After these 3 months, the deer tested positive (by test only) and no necropsy performed. Massive stress factors and no control group was administered.

Gajdusek did the same type of barbaric experiments with blood, urine, bodily fluid, and spinal fluid. The infected fluids should have been fully apparent in the brain yet, transference to prove contagious did not happen. Months to years later, some of the injected monkeys suffered coordination and movement problems. Yes, would seem logical with inoculations to the brain.

More experiments have been performed using these methods in an attempt to transfer "infected matter" to other species and resulting in no mutations being seen in brain tissue, even with an electron microscopes. Creating brain inflammation by injecting brain material, or any other material by injection, does not prove transmission or contagiousness.

When does the brain ever come into contact with another brain in nature? Injecting blood, urine, or saliva into animals is not causing them to become sick with CWD. NOTHING like this happens in nature. Yet, here we are with reports of the possibility of CWD being in other species and possibly, eventually humans.

This lack of natural infectiousness is proof alone to defeat the CWD fears of a "spread".

In these experiment there are no controls. There are no comparative animals and therefore, shotty science. Taking "infected" brains and shoving them into healthy deer to see what happens but, they aren't taking healthy brains and injecting them into healthy deer as a control. Chances are very high that both would be sick, at the same rate. Shame on the 'experts'.

The disease that the Agencies tend to compare to CWD is the neurodegenerative disease, CJD (Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease). It is also known as Mad Cow, BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy). It is described as a spongy brain. Most people have heard of CJD, but not CWD.

In 2005, CJD was cancelled. (Massive testing ceased and so did BSE)  
The BSE hysteria cost Germany 1.5 billion euros. That is equivalent to \$1,562,434. The cattle farms were imposed with obligatory tests on 5.1 million cattle and 200 were deemed positive. If you believe those 200 cattle were infected, that meat would have infected 3 people, at the most, over 30 years. The feeding of bonemeal to cows has been disproven.

In the United States, 787,711 cows were tested from June 2004-August 2006. 4-7 animals were "infected" in a population of 42 million adult cattle. Were these 4-7 necropsied? It has been stated: *Testing all slaughter cattle for BSE could produce an exceedingly high rate of false negative test results and offer misleading assurances of the presence, or absence, of disease.* Hardly an infectious disease. These statistics and methods sound parallel to CWD.

United Kingdom reported that most CJD cases were in northern Scotland while most cattle with BSE, were in southern England. So, cows in Southern England caused CJD in northern Scotland? That would mean that all the meat from these cows, was shipped to northern Scotland and only eaten there. That is not traditionally how the big meat market works.

In 1985 a law was passed in the United Kingdom forcing British farmers to apply Phosmet (insecticide) to the necks of cattle. Phosmet is known to be highly toxic and causes severe neural damage to the brain and nervous system. The government forced neurotoxins on cattle and then they say, "It must be prion" causing a disease.

Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Switzerland were required high concentrations and those countries were where most of BSE occurred. The farmers that were organic and fed the bonemeal to cows, had no problems. 1990s brought a law that repelled this Phosmet mandate and there was a dramatic reduction of BSE cases. The British government admitted Phosmet was a factor in the onset of BSE and added that this disease can look like a muscle disorder or a wasting disorder that hits the nervous system at any different point and gets slightly different symptoms.

I am not disagreeing that CWD is real and a neurodegenerative disease. **I am disagreeing that it is caused by a magical protein and is infectious.** The lineage of this type of "deadly, fatal disease", has a historical playbook.

The CWD narrative follows the same playbook of Kuru and Mad Cow. Recently, we have been bombarded with fear-mongering media of H5N1. Another example of HUMAN DIMENSIONS.

H5N1 is an additional bureaucratic narrative that is going after another animal. The cattle (beef and dairy), poultry, sheep, and pork industries have been taking punches for years. KILL THEM ALL TO SAVE THEM ALL has been the 'expert' thought process based on "science".

The H5N1 narrative scare began on an island in the Baltic Sea as Germany came to search for dead birds. They collected and tested, with occasional positive tests, as no one was able to state what caused a positive or negative result. They chose to overlook that only a fraction of the dead birds were positive and no one asked why the birds died. Keep in mind, the Germans were **looking** for dead birds. These birds wintered in Germany and didn't even come from the Baltic Sea and were isolated so, the swans that were blamed for the outbreak of Avian Influenza, could not have contracted H5N1.

2003-2006, claims of 153 people died of H5N1 yet, there is no proof that it was the killer. If you study the reports of the deceased, there is no evidence that H5N1 was the issue. Some had cold symptoms (thousands die from colds each year). The medicine given to these patients did not show it combatted the H5N1 virus and Tamiflu was the prescription of choice.

*Nov 1, 2005 (CIDRAP News) – President George W. Bush today proposed \$7.1 billion in spending to prepare for an influenza pandemic, including \$5 billion for vaccines and drugs, as his administration released an outline of its preparedness strategy.*

*"At this moment, there is no pandemic influenza in the United States or the world," Bush said in a speech in Bethesda, MD., today. "But if history is our guide, there is reason to be concerned."*

*He explained the threat posed by the H5N1 avian flu virus, saying it is "still primarily an animal disease" but could spread around the world if it gained the ability to pass efficiently from person to person. "Our country has been given fair warning of this danger to our homeland—and time to prepare," he said.*

*Bush said his strategy has three main elements: detecting outbreaks anywhere in the world; stockpiling vaccines and antiviral drugs while improving the ability to make new vaccines for a pandemic virus; and improving general readiness at the federal, state, and local levels.*

George W. Bush said that 2 million people may die from H5N1 and ordered 200 million bottles of Tamiflu at \$100 each for a bird disease that has never been proven to impact birds, or humans. Tamiflu is being sued under the False Claims Act for \$1.5 billion+.

The human dimensions tactic began fanning the flames of terror and over 100 million animals have died because of this panic. Only a fraction of the deaths have been accounted for by H5N1 and more birds have died from mass exterminations prompted by panic of authorities, then H5N1. It has since been exposed that there is a patent number assigned to H5N1. This would explain why the media did not ask questions, rather they promoted the “unknown” hysteria. Again, a repeat of the thought process, KILL THEM ALL TO SAVE THEM ALL and the repeated statement of, “We just don’t know,” when CWD questions are asked.

The CWD narrative with the backing of media, and a threat to humans and other animals, is killing more deer than CWD has, or ever will. North Dakota massacred 50+ deer in a panic reaction when a dead deer was reported in Williston that tested “positive”. A United States Fish and Wildlife crew was called in and together, with NDGF, they murdered healthy deer and fawn, over a corn pile, at night. It has been reported by neighbors as a “blood bath”. The 50+ deer were tested and all announced negative. The meat was disposed of.

The NDGF has stated that they have culling tags mixed in with the submitted allotted rifle tags therefore, having the North Dakota sportsmen perform the culling for them. Director Jeb Williams stated to the House and Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committees on January 10, 2025, “Hunting has to be apart of the solution (to CWD)?”.

The current supplied data for CWD in North Dakota:

51,052 deer tested since 1998  
122 detections (not necropsied)  
1 confirmation (questioned 2/24/25 to NDGF to seek answer if TSE was present)

This one deer in this data report was the “Williston Massacre” deer that was found dead, and in the diagnostic examination report, it was noted a mass was on the deer’s head and could be a contributing factor to the brain damage. Necropsy is the only way to confirm a neurodegenerative disease because you must see the holes in the myelin of the brain (TSE). Any other reports of “positive” or “detections” are based solely on a test and are being announced as CWD infected deer which is, misinformation.

The repeat of the hypothesized science is deafening, as demonstrated with Kuru, Mad Cow (BSE) and H5N1. It seems to be the same playbook with a different species, all backed by Human Dimension and shotty science.

The NDGF has also announced that they are focusing on Human Dimensions to “inform the public”. This push started in October of 2022 when the NDGF applied and received, \$96,300 for a federal grant: *Shifting Behaviors to Lower the Risk of CWD; a multi-media approach*, and then again in 2024 being one of the 16 states to receive funds from the CWD Surveillance and Management (HR 5608) Act worth \$420 million. NDGF was awarded this time with \$168,723 for a federal grant titled: *Cultivating Long term Engagement with a Long Term Issue*. That is \$265,023 to get us to think they way they want us to about CWD.

**Why would it be so imperative to submit grants to change or mold the minds of the people of North Dakota?** \$265,023 is a substantial amount that could have been used for the deer in areas such as habitat but instead was used on the **people** of North Dakota.

All “expert” dialogue is centered on a document titled: AFWA (Association of Fish and Wildlife). This guide is what the Wildlife agencies around the nation, are tied to when repeating the CWD narrative. There is a human dimensions section that spans from pages 87-89. On page 87, there is a section titled: *Best Management Practices involving human dimensions in implementing a CWD program*. This section also outlines how to use surveys to “explore hunter attitudes related to CWD including effort, success rates, and willingness to accept regulatory changes to manage CWD”.

The second section on this page outlines elements of a communication plan:

- a. Contain key messages about CWD.
  - b. Include and use the best available science, preferably from the host state
  - c. Frequently be updated.
  - d. Endure openness, honesty, and transparency
  - e. Use social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) to convey information to the widest range of age and cultural segments of the population.
- 
- a. FEAR seems to be the key message.
  - b. Testing-restricting- culling- human dimensions are the “best available science” tools being used. NOTHING for the deer. KILL THEM TO SAVE THEM.
  - c. To find real data on CWD, one must contact NDGF. Only the information they want exposed is reported. Advisory meetings are protocol and input lies on deaf ears.
  - d. Public is reported that there are 120 detections yet, the only way to confirm CWD is by necropsy so, that confirmation number is possibly **one**. Honesty has been covered by hypocrisy with 5 units that were to be restricted (2 in 2023, 3 in 2024) according to the NDGF criteria, and were not. 9 more are to be restricted in 2025 yet, we shall see
  - e. Commercials, billboards, social media, radio, podcasts, search engine marketing, email, printing materials, magazines, tv, radio, mailings, practice targets.

**The NDGF seems to be fluent in submitting and receiving federal grants therefore, it would not be an added work load to take this talent and apply for grants that focus on the big game of North Dakota rather than the minds of the people of North Dakota.**  
Perhaps additional habitat efforts.

Human Dimensions manages people, not disease.

The amount of money that has been used for CWD is astounding. Nationwide, over \$1 billion from the federal government. \$919,612 of North Dakotans hunting and fishing license and fees along with \$265,023 in federal grants, which is the people of the United States. All for a HYPOTHESIS. Each CWD test costs North Dakota \$76 as of a 2021 report. That is \$228,00 for 2021 alone and the agency has been testing since 1998. That is approxiametly \$2.5 million for just testing in North Dakota.

This CWD disease should actually be called a Testing Epidemic. Testing with methods (ELISA, IHC, Western Blot) that do not detect “prion” and focus on antigen and what is attached to them (bacteria, virus, fungus). Upon a conversation with the manufacturer of tests that use the ELISA method (NDGF tests), he stated that there is an unreliability factor of 4-7%, are similar to the PCR, and do not detect prion. The tests being used are only available to universities, research settings, and agencies. None of these institutions will share what they are testing for. If you attempt to purchase a test, even as a cervid farmer, it would be impossible. Why are these tests so secretive?

These tests are driving the hysteria, decision making, and killings of thousands of healthy deer.

When questioning the CWD methods or tools being used by the NDGF, the consistent response is “robust science”. There is a page on the NDGF website with this “science” and also a statement by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agency that was approved March 8, 2019. Again, terms of allusiveness (162 in the complete AFWA) and more specifically a paragraph that reads:

*However, alternate theories regarding the cause of CWD have been postulated and continue to be examined by some in the scientific community. These theories, which explore possible etiologies including viruses, bacteria, trace mineral imbalances, and others, have been advanced for many years and often are supported by peer-reviewed, scientific publications. While our understanding of CWD epidemiology can benefit from diverse research perspectives and investigations, the preponderance of scientific information currently available strongly supports prions as the causative agent of all TSEs, and this is accepted by the vast majority of scientists working in this field.*

The AFWA does not say that “prion” are the causative agent. It states that they support the **consensus** that “prions” are the causative agent for CWD and at this time, is accepted by the majority of the scientists in the field. This statement also points out that there are peer-reviewed etiologies that include virus, bacteria, and trace mineral imbalances (nutrition) that are supported in scientific publications. The NDGF has chosen to follow the “Prion Hypothesis”.

The Associations of Fish and Wildlife have made it clear that they are supporting and following scientific CONSENSUS with the “prion” theory. **There is no consensus in science.** A billion federal dollars has been spent on consensus? Thousands of deer have been killed on consensus? People have been exposed to massive human dimension campaigns based on consensus? Rights are being taken away on consensus? We can’t pull a trigger when a deer is around the feed that we can already place, based on consensus?

What makes us think that we need to intervene with CWD? The data does not indicate that interventions are necessary. There is no proof that CWD is contagious. CWD is not directly impacting humans. The numbers do not show panic even if you accept a detection as diseased. The cause of CWD is suspected to be “prion” yet, there is no proof. The atomic structure of a “prion” is not even known. Where are the pictures of “prion” during the scrapie era of 2003-2016? It is said that “prion” are a bit larger than DNA (double helix) and the double helix has been seen and pictured. Why hasn’t the “prion”?

CWD seems to be a “problem” when federal funds become available (2002, 2012, 2021, 2022).

Sportsmen and landowners are the people that are using common sense and advocating for the deer while resisting the massively funded human dimensions campaign.

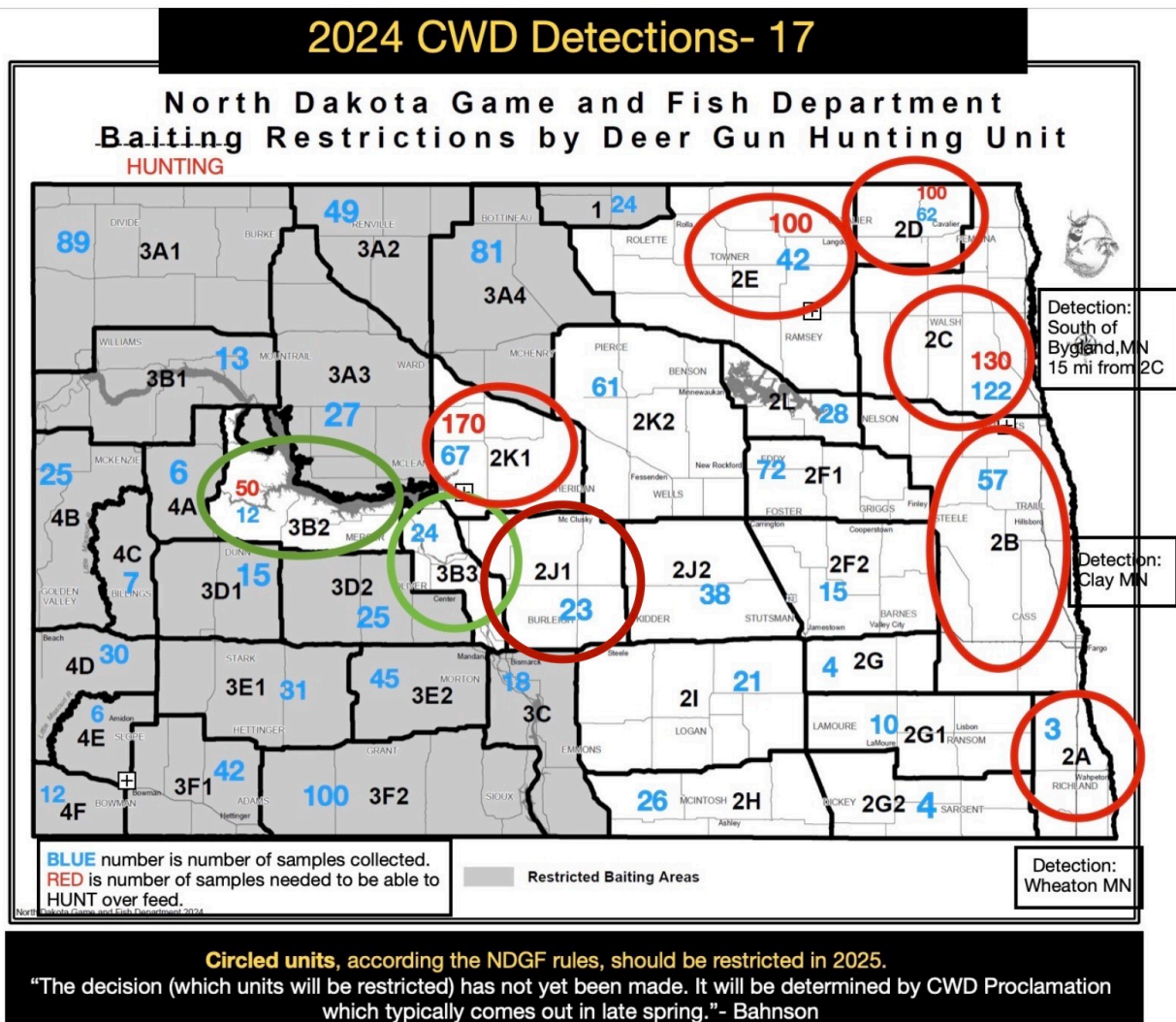
In summary, there are lineage situations, methods and “diseases” that demonstrate CWD is not contagious, not deadly, not a “prion” disease, and relies heavily on HUMAN DIMENSIONS to stay valid and threatening. Therefore, why SB 2137 is imperative for the deer and people of North Dakota.

2009 Legislation secured the feeding of wildlife, border to border in North Dakota and with the above information in mind, and human dimension information aside, it is quite apparent that pulling a trigger, around feed that we can legally place, is a simple right that needs to be returned on private property.

Thank you for investing time in this lineage and supportive testimony for SB 2137.

Respectfully,

Pat Backer



In 2005, the NDGF stated that they wanted feeding of wildlife banned in the entire state. 2009 Legislation attempted to do just that and brought hundreds of North Dakotans to the capitol to unite and speak out against this banning. The 2009 secured legislation says that the entire state can feed wildlife, border to border, even if in a restricted unit, any time, and any amount. THE PEOPLE want to opportunity returned to be able to pull the trigger around this feed that we can legally place, anytime, any amount, any location. This is what SB 2137 is about.

**By the looks of the above map, the NDGF is sure making headway on a HUNTING RESTRICTION for the entire state.**

I support SB2137.

It is my understanding that NDGF can't directly regulate supplement feeding itself on private land, but I strongly oppose their decision to restrict hunting over supplemental feed. This restriction is an illogical solution in regard to keeping deer from congregating.

Rather than imposing restrictions, NDGF should trust that hunters, as stewards of the land, can manage their hunting practices responsibly. We are committed to following ethical hunting standards, using safe supplemental feed practices, and taking steps to reduce any and all risk to the herds. I strongly believe that private property rights should be respected, and landowners should have the autonomy to manage their own land as they see fit.

Steve & Windi Portenga

Chronic wasting disease is of great concern for the deer population. Allowing bating would reek havoc on disease prevention measures.

Please recommend a do pass on SB 2137 and end the hunting restrictions.

I support SB 2137

I support SB 2137 and ask the committee members to reccomend a do pass without any ammendments attached to it.

SB 2137 has my full support and I urge a Do Pass on this bill.

Vote yes on Sb 2137

03/04/2025

Dear Energy and Natural Resources Committee members,

I am writing to you today to show my support for SB 2137.

A similar bill was one of the largest topics of debate in the 68th legislative assembly under House Bill 1151. This previous bill passed the house with overwhelming support from constituents (approximately 80% testimonial support) and a majority of the members of the House Of Representatives. It also had a "do pass" recommendation coming out of committee on the Senate side, but failed on the floor due to sudden political pressures from outside of the legislative branch.

Please be diligently mindful of constituents' responses during this legislative session. SB 2137's intent is strongly supported throughout the outdoor community and hunting over feed is a practice that is widely accepted and/or utilized by the majority of hunters here in North Dakota. The "science" that the Game and Fish and opponents of this bill will try to tout as a viable reason to dismiss SB2137 is not concrete, nor is it proven to be effective in mitigating CWD transmission and control. In-fact, it is quite contrary as the recommended methods/strategies for disease control have been proven to fail in many other states where similar CWD protocols have been enacted; in-fact look no further than CWD data here within our own state in unit 3F2, where many restrictions (including eliminating hunting over feed) have been put in place for well over a decade, but yet positive tests continue to climb annually in this unit. Interestingly enough, the positive test are also mostly attributed to mule deer, which in most cases hardly ever relate or pattern to hunter placed feed and seldom visit feed sites.

There simply is no reason to implement a hunting restriction (such as banning the ability to hunt over feed) when there is no definitive evidence that supports that the practice of feeding wildlife, and ESPECIALLY hunting game over feed has had a detrimental impact to the herd. Even our own Game and Fish department, responsible for managing the health of our deer herd has hypocritically, (but strategically) disregarded their own policies and criteria for implementing baiting restrictions in several units in the face of a so-called "epidemic" in order to not rouse more sportsmen who would support SB 2137 during this legislative session.

I hope you are encouraged through this testimony to support SB2137, to help preserve a useful tool that allows hunters the ability to pursue their quarry in a way that they choose to, without restriction, one that utilizes a practice that has been accepted and applied by hunters since the dawn of time.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Matt Will".

Matt Williamson  
Minot, ND

My name is Nick Hill and I am in absolute opposition to SB 2137. Chronic wasting disease is a real danger to North Dakota's big game population. In the case of severe disease spread, the effects could be detrimental to local deer populations. Not only is this a huge problem for the animals, we do not know the extent of this disease's zoonotic capabilities. We need to reduce the spread of this disease for human sake as well.

To limit the North Dakota Game and Fish's ability to manage this disease would be a huge mistake. We need to keep this in the hands of the experts. This law is not about power, or limiting opportunities for the public. That has never been and will never be the goal of the North Dakota Game and Fish. This is about being healthy. Many hunters all across the state harvest deer every year, and they need to have the opportunity to not only see healthy deer populations, but to be able to harvest a healthy deer that does not have any signs of Chronic wasting disease.

This is a difficult situation and unfortunately it may come at the expense of certain hunter's ability to bait deer. However, we need to listen to the experts here. These are not people far away in Washington DC that we do not know or trust. These are people in our backyards, living in this state with us, trying to make the right choice for us. The folks at the North Dakota Game and Fish are exactly who we want to make this tough decision. Opposing this bill is the right thing to do, for our wildlife and for our people.

1/16/2025

SB-2137

As a private landowner and hunter who has seen the benefits of supplemental feed for deer, I strongly encourage the passing of this bill. My private property rights will not be restricted when concerning supplemental feed to help an already struggling deer herd.

I urge the voting of yes on SB-2137.

Cole Thompson

My name is Chad Tucker and I am an avid deer hunter from Burleigh County. I am writing to voice my opposition to SB2137. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has a staff of expert biologists that use the best available science to manage and protect our wildlife, not only for today but for future generations. The long-term effects of CWD on North Dakota's deer herd is uncertain, lets not chance it because "Bubba" wants to shoot a deer off his corn pile.

To whom it may concern,

I, Claire Burrows, am in opposition to SB 2137. I believe it will be a sever detriment to the health of the deer population in North Dakota.

Thank you,

Claire Burrows  
claire.m.burrows@gmail.com

Dear members of the House Energy and Natural Resources,

Please join me in opposing Senate Bill 2137.

This bill would strip the authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish to implement their CWD Management Plan by prohibiting the Game and Fish from banning baiting practices.

This bill could also have far reaching effects in the future, in situations that that we may not even be able to imagine at this point.

Please continue to allow the professional and passionate employees of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department to make proper and educated decisions regarding our public resources.

Thank you,

Nevin Jenner

Williston, North Dakota

701-570-0250

I believe the ability to restrict supplemental feed is an important tool to manage the spread of wildlife diseases. I support the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's ability to use this tool to appropriately manage North Dakota's wildlife.

Erica Matykiewicz  
Bismarck, ND

Dear Committee I strongly urge you to pass Bill 2137.

My name is Chandler Jacob and I am from Minot, ND. I have been hunting big game in ND for over 20 years. Myself and a majority of people have issues with how the Game and Fish are handling CWD. It is important to understand that it's not illegal to supplemental feed. Its only illegal when you start actively pursuing animals over it. Deer by nature are social animals, so the idea that it will stop the spread is silly in my opinion. I believe us as sportsman need to take the opposite approach and help deer throughout harsh winter. In past winters deer numbers have significantly declined to do lack of food. The game and fish are spreading fear using CWD when there has only been one deer death to CWD. 2 years ago half the deer herd died due to EHD and there has been zero interest in that or how to slow it down. Why hasn't the game and fish looked into that? They tell us to trust their science but it continues to be debunked. They have a CWD plan in place and in the last two years, have not even followed their own program. If CWD is so scary why are they not banning units that should have been banned two years ago based off their program. You guys will hear some more great information Friday morning. But for these reasons I hope you vote Yes to 2137.

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<html><head></head><body style="overflow-wrap: break-word; -webkit-  
nbsp-mode: space; line-break: after-white-space;">Hello, I am writing today to show my support of SB 2137. I am asking you to please recommend a due pass on this. As a landowner I support supplemental feeding and feel it is our right to do so if we choose. Thank you&nbsp;</body></html>
```

Please support 2137. After all the testing there is not one single next step as to what the Game and Fish end goal is. Just more testing and monitoring.

SB 2137

Senators,

Please vote in favor of this bill. Baiting is wanted in North Dakota and I think the people have shown their feelings in the matter. I have yet to see facts from science that show this disease is a large threat to deer populations across the state. My mind could be changed if science could show us that CWD was spreading rapidly and was an actual threat to deer populations. Currently they cannot even show us what a "prion" from the disease looks like. This bill is protecting hunters rights. Why is the government concerned about what people can and cannot do on private property to harvest a deer? North Dakota's Game and Fish Department can prove 1 deer has had CWD in the time frame that they have been monitoring this disease. Unfortunately as a hunter I have been forgotten about by North Dakotas Game and Fish Department. License costs are up higher than ever before, while opportunity continues to decline. They also dropped the ball big time managing the deer herd after the winter of 2023 when across the state we saw thousands of deer die from starvation. I also would like to point out that the majority of the "opposition" to this bill comes from out of state interests, organization and or employees of those out of state interests. Please give SB 2137 a "DO PASS" .

Thanks

Ken Carbary

701 230-2875

March 5, 2024

### CWD Testimony

I am a landowner in NE ND. I am also a bow hunter and a conservationist. I am very concerned about the spread of CWD. Please vote to allow the professionals at ND GF to use whatever methods necessary to stop the spread of this disease.

Thank you,

Jeff D. Furstenau

Members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing today to express my opposition to SB2137 and encourage you to give the bill a *do not pass* recommendation.

I am a husband, father of three, and an avid outdoorsman who enjoys spending time outdoors with my family. North Dakota is rich in outdoor opportunity, many of which are maintained and even enhanced by the dedicated staff working for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF). Their dedication and commitment to science-based management, putting the health of the resource first and foremost should not be legislated away from them.

Many in support of SB2137 talk of NDGF employees as though they are entrenched bureaucrats living in Bethesda or D.C. with no experience of how things work “in the real world.” The reality is they live among us in North Dakota, share our values, raise their families as we do, and enjoy the same things we enjoy that make this state special.

I do not oppose baiting big game. I oppose legislation that will take away the tools that NDGF uses to maintain healthy wildlife populations. SB2137 will legislate away a tool that can be used to maintain the health of big game animals that are owned in trust by all citizens of North Dakota and will establish a dangerous precedence in wildlife management in the state.

Please oppose the passing of SB2137.

Joseph Doll  
Bismarck, ND

I am in total  
opposition to this bill.  
This bill is like  
reoccurring metastatic  
cancer. It shows up  
every legislative  
session. Let's cure  
cancer once and for  
all!

March 5, 2025

SB2137

As a landowner and sportsman, I am writing in opposition to SB2137. I feel you should allow the individuals who do this as their profession to make the call on supplemental feeding or baiting. This is not a one size that fits all solution. Passing this bill will be taking away one of their tools to keep the state big game herds healthy.

I am recommending a Do Not Pass on SB2137.

Matthew Andvik

I ask the committee members to please reccomend a Do Pass on SB 2137.

Vote yes on SB 2137 as I can already place feed anywhere in any amount at any time in the stated of North Dakota I just can't hunt over it. End the hunting restriction

Dear committee members please reccomend a DO PASS on SB 2137 without any ammendments attached to it keep the bill simple and end these hunting restrictions.

Vote Green on SB 2137.

Reccomend a DO PASS on SB2137

I am in support of this bill. The reason I'm in support of this bill is because of the lack of common sense coming from the game and fish. The fact that they are only restricting baiting while you are hunting over the bait makes no sense at all.

There is no science behind what the Game and fish are doing.

Jay Hettinger

I am in favor of bill SB2137 to allow the future generations years of hunting opportunities. I am asking that you please vote yes on SB2137.

Thank you,  
Jeremy Wittenberg



North Dakota House Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
600 E. Blvd Ave,  
Bismark, ND 58505

Dear Members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the National Deer Association (NDA) to express our opposition to Senate Bill 2137 (SB 2137). This bill, if enacted, would severely undermine wildlife management in North Dakota by stripping the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDFWD) of its authority to regulate supplemental feeding and baiting, two essential tools in controlling chronic wasting disease (CWD) and maintaining the health of the state's deer herds.

We believe SB 2137 represents a direct threat to effective wildlife management in North Dakota. CWD is a deadly disease that has already impacted deer populations across the nation, and its spread continues to be a growing concern. The NDFWD's ability to regulate supplemental feeding and baiting is a critical tool in mitigating CWD's spread. These practices can increase the concentration of wildlife in certain areas, which in turn increases the risk of disease transmission, especially CWD. Allowing for uncontrolled supplemental feeding and baiting could make North Dakota's deer population more vulnerable to the disease, putting both wildlife health and future hunting opportunities at risk.

By removing the NDFWD's authority to regulate these practices, SB 2137 would essentially eliminate scientifically grounded, evidence-based management strategies that are crucial for protecting North Dakota's deer herds. The NDFWD, as experts in wildlife management, are in the best position to determine how best to manage these practices in a way that prevents the spread of CWD. Taking away this authority jeopardizes the department's ability to take timely and necessary actions to safeguard the health of the state's wildlife.

Furthermore, the NDA believes that the scientific community and wildlife management professionals, including the NDFWD, must be trusted to make decisions that are grounded in research, data, and an understanding of the complex dynamics of wildlife health. SB 2137 undermines this expertise by allowing political interference in a matter that requires a nuanced and scientifically informed approach.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose SB 2137. The future of North Dakota's wildlife depends on the ability of experts like the NDFWD to manage these critical issues effectively. Removing their authority would be a step backward in protecting both our deer populations and the future of hunting in North Dakota.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to protecting the state's natural resources, and we ask for your support in ensuring that science-based management of CWD and other wildlife concerns remains a priority in North Dakota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine Appling-Pooler".

Catherine Appling-Pooler  
Director of Policy  
National Deer Association

I support SB 2137 please vote yes

Dear ND Legislature:

Allowing the baiting of deer in North Dakota is a clear risk to the health of deer in North Dakota. Encouraging the congregation of deer leads to increased risk of contracting Chronic Wasting Disease. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a prion disease that affects members of the Cervidae family. It is a contagious neurological disease that is believed to be spread through herds through direct and indirect contact. It is always fatal. The prions are capable of living in the environment for long periods of time, up to 2.2 years (Miller et al. 2004). Due to the ability of the prions to survive in the environment, indirect contact with deer has been shown to spread CWD.

It is highly important that the spread of CWD is mitigated and tracked in North Dakota to maintain a healthy deer population.

Please vote against this legislation to preserve the deer population in North Dakota for a healthy ecosystem and posterity.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

Lydia Wilson

Student and Wildlife Technician, UND Biology Department, May 2025

Miller, M. W., E. S. Williams, N. T. Hobbs, and L. L. Wolfe. 2004. Environmental sources of prion transmission in mule deer. *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 10:1003-1006.

1/11/25

Written Testimony in favor of SB 2137

I am writing today to show my support for SB 2137.

A very similar bill was a main focus of the 68th legislative session in HB 1151. This previous bill had overwhelming support of the ND citizens to the tune of 80% written testimony in support of it. It had a do-pass recommendation before failing on the senate floor from sudden political pressure/opposition

In the recent years there is growing concern for the ND GF departments best available science when it comes to managing CWD. The department has adopted practices such as culling ( poaching) approximately 50 deer in the Williston area to find a total of 0 positive tests and all the meat wasted in the name of best Available science furthermore the act of supplemental feeding is 100% legal across the entire state , year around. I can set up a tree stand and ground blind and photograph these big game animals year around over supplemental feed 365 days a year, however if I attempt to hunt with a weapon over feed it then becomes illegal/restricted in some deer management units. This hypocrisy is not a supplemental feeding restriction as the department calls it rather an overreach of a department trying to further restrict hunting in this great state. I ask you how can supplemental feed be placed 365 days a year statewide and not be a problem with spreading CWD until a person bring a bow or gun with? I respectfully ask the committee, house and senate to do what 80% of the residents of this great state want and that is support SB 2137

Thank you for your time

Josh Dinius, DPT

As an outdoorsman im asking that SB2137 gets passed and end the hunting restrictions.

Chairman Porter, House Energy and Natural resource Committee Members my name is Jamie Thompson a nineteen year old college student from Antler ND. My comments today are on SB 2137.

From the moment I picked up my first bow at our local archery club, I knew this sport would be a lifelong passion. It was not just about hitting a target—it was about discipline, respect, and the deep connection it fosters with nature. Over the years, bow hunting became a cherished tradition in my family, one that brought us closer together and taught us invaluable lessons about patience, responsibility, and the beauty of the natural world.

Bow hunting is not just a hobby, it is a way of life. It is a practice rooted in respect for wildlife and the land. However, it is also a pursuit that requires significant time, effort, and skill. For someone like me, who juggled a demanding highschool schedule filled with classes, sports, and involvement in multiple organizations, finding the time to sit in the field with my bow was a challenge. Most days, I left my house at 8:00 a.m. and did not return till 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. Despite my love for bow hunting, the time I could dedicate to it was limited. Now, as a college student three hours away from home and only able to return home two days a week, finding time to bow hunt has become even more difficult. Baiting allows me to make the most of those precious hours, giving me the best chance to fill my archery tag responsibility and ethically.

Baiting is a tool—a means to position deer for a clean, ethical shot. As a proficient archer, I know the importance of making every shot count. Bow hunting is not about luck or recklessness; it is about precision and respect for the animal. A well-placed shot ensures a quick, humane harvest, preventing unnecessary suffering. Baiting helps achieve this by drawing deer into a controlled environment where I can take a shot at a known yardage, one I have practiced countless times.

Without baiting, hunters often face unpredictable circumstances. Deer may appear at odd angles or distances, increasing the likelihood of a poor shot. For someone with limited time—whether it is a busy high school schedule or a college student who can only hunt on weekends—baiting reduces these variables and ensures that every opportunity in the field is a responsible one.

Bow hunting is about more than harvesting a deer. It is about the memories made along the way—the quiet moments in the stand, the laughter shared with family, and the profound sense of peace that comes from being immersed in nature. Some of my fondest memories are sitting in the stand with my dad, playing a few good games of rummy while we waited for a deer to appear, or giggling with a friend even though we knew we were supposed to

stay quiet. These moments remind me that bow hunting is not just a sport; it is a bond that ties us to each other and to the land.

I will never forget the pride in my dad's voice when I made a clean shot on a buck and he said "Nice shot, kid, you got him," followed by a fist bump. Or the excitement in my brothers' voices when they heard the news: "Your sister got her buck." These moments are etched into my heart, and they are a testament to the joy and connection that bow hunting brings to families.

Bow hunting also provides a rare opportunity to connect with nature on a profound level. Sitting in the stand, you notice things you might otherwise overlook—the way the wind dances through the trees, the songs of birds as they flit about, and the quiet grace of a deer as it moves through the field. These moments remind us of the beauty and fragility of the world around us, teaching us to appreciate and protect it.

Baiting plays a role in this connection. By drawing deer into a specific area, it allows hunters to observe them up close, to study their behaviors and movements. This deepens our respect for the animals we hunt and reinforces the importance of ethical practices.

For me, baiting is not about taking shortcuts; it is about making the most of the time I have while ensuring that every shot is ethical and humane. As a high school student with a packed schedule, I did not have the luxury of spending hours upon hours in the field. Now, as a college student living three hours away from home and spending five out of the seven days on campus, my time to hunt is even more limited. Baiting allows me to hunt responsibly, giving me the best chance to succeed without compromising the principles of bow hunting. It is a tool that helps level the playing field for hunters like me, who are committed to doing things the right way but face significant time constraints.

Bow hunting is a tradition that goes far beyond the act of harvesting a deer. It is about family, memories, and deep connection to nature. It is about responsibility, respect, and the lessons we pass down to future generations. Baiting is an essential tool that helps hunters uphold these values, ensuring that every shot is ethical and every hunt is meaningful. Allowing baiting in bow hunting is not just a matter of convenience; it is a matter of ethics, responsibility, and preserving a tradition that means too much to so many. Let us ensure that the future generations can experience the same joy, connection, and life lessons that bow hunting has given me.

In closing, I urge you to vote in favor of SB 2137. Thank you, Jamie Thompson

Dear members of the House Energy and Natural Resources committee. I ask for a do pass of SB 2137. Last session and this session 70+% wrote in in favor of this bill. Please follow the peoples wishes and vote in favor of this bill. End the departments HUNTING restriction.

Hello,

I am in strong opposition to SB 2137.

First, why is it that we humans believe that wildlife should be provided feed? They are wild animals, let them be wild.

Second, supplemental feed/bait used for hunting, is not hunting. Using supplemental feed/bait, is no different from walking out in the pasture and shooting cattle feeding on a hay bale. This bill would allow wildlife to be treated much more as domesticated livestock, than wild animals.

Third, this bill violates every aspect of ethical game pursuit (fair chase). Hunters employing supplemental feed/bait have an unfair advantage over hunters who choose an ethical approach; I have experienced this first hand.

When I first started deer hunting, baiting, food plots, etc.... were not as common as they are today. Now that baiting and/or food plots are more common with many land owners (regardless of the legality) it privatizes a public resource. It does so, by drawing and commonly retaining wildlife in close proximity to the bait, food plot, etc.... This often leads to wildlife staying completely on privately owned land, almost the same as if they were domesticated livestock. This gives landowners or people baiting and ability to hoard our public wildlife resources.

Fourth, this bill also jeopardizes wildlife health, by enticing more wildlife to gather in higher concentration at a bait pile. This higher concentration of animals in one area promotes diseases, such as Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) to spread more easily. Degradation of herd health, also leads to further ecosystem damage.

I strongly oppose SB 2137 and encourage you to reject this and any bill that would allow feeding/baiting wildlife.

Josh G.

Grand Forks, ND

Support and pass SB 2137

Pass SB 2137

As a land owner and hunter in North Dakota, I strongly oppose the use of feed for baiting/hunting. It causes the deer and other wildlife to group up, and greatly increases the risk of diseases spreading, such as chronic wasting (CWD). If we care about our environment, and our wildlife, and making sure hunting continues to be safe, and possible, for future generations, we need to do everything we can to keep the populations healthy, and prevent the spread of disease. Banning baiting would be the biggest step we could take to do so.

Thanks,

Cody Furstenau

Reccomend a Do Pass on SB 2137.

I fully support SB 2137 and am asking the house to please pass this bill



**To:** Honorable Members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
**Re:** Senate Bill 2137 – Use of Supplemental Feed for Hunting  
**Position:** Oppose  
**Date:** March 7, 2025

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Honorable Members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I respectfully ask that you oppose Senate Bill 2137 (SB 2137), a bill that would strip the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (GFD) of their ability to promulgate certain rules regarding hunting. Specifically, SB 2137 undermines the GFD's ability to adopt or implement any policy that prohibits the use of supplemental feed for the hunting of big game animals on private land. In North Dakota, the GFD is the authority best suited to make science-based wildlife management decisions and should accordingly retain the ability to promulgate rules pertaining to hunting and wildlife.

Founded in 1989, CSF is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitals advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

State fish and wildlife management agencies have long been recognized as the primary and most well-equipped managers of fish and wildlife in their respective states. CSF firmly believes that decisions regarding the management of North Dakota's wildlife should be made by the GFD, which is comprised of capable wildlife biologists that understand the ever-evolving threats to wildlife species and can use this extensive knowledge to make timely adjustments through administrative action. It is crucial that the North Dakota GFD, the agency specifically established by this legislature to protect the storied fish and wildlife resources of North Dakota, retain their ability to practice science-based wildlife management.

CSF respectfully asks the honorable members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee to oppose the passage of Senate Bill 2137, thereby retaining the Game and Fish Department's authority to practice sound science-based wildlife management. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this issue. Should you require additional information on this, or other sportsmen's-related topics, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jake Gould".

Jake Gould  
Senior Coordinator, Great Plains States  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
jgould@congressionalsportsmen.org | 202-594-7973

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### Your Inside Connection to Outdoor Legislation

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Scientists believe CWD proteins (prions) likely spread between animals through body fluids like feces, saliva, blood, or urine, either through direct contact or INDIRECTLY through environmental contamination of SOIL, food or water.

2024 / 2025- Are you going to ban the movement of people. Sound familiar?

If YOU are in a CWD County. Will you are no longer allowed to leave your County.

Are you going to ban scrapes?

Are you going to ban rubs?

Are you going to ban bucks fighting?

Are you going to ban fawns nursing?

Are you going to ban deer grooming and eating ticks off each other?

Are you going to ban deer from eating in the same place they poop?

Are you going to ban small food plots?

Are you going to ban deer from orchards?

Are you going to ban deer peeing and drinking out of the same small wildlife waterhole at the same time?

Are you going to ban a herd animal from being a herd animal?

Are you going to ban buck dispersal in the fall?

Are you going to ban natural mineral licks?

Are you going to ban cattle farmer mineral salt blocks and molasses tubs?

Are you going to ban USDA-Aphis Hog Trappers from of corn bait sites for feral hogs?

Are you going to ban losing a wounded deer or road hit deer? (Whole Carcass left in environment as a hot spot) and scavengers (Dogs, Coyotes, Bobcats, Crows, Birds of Prey, etc moving Gut Piles & Carcass on landscape and scat with CWD proteins found in it)

Are you going to ban farmers from using Depredation Permits? (No record keeping, no testing, whole carcasses left in environment)

Are you going to ban City Deer? – (Concentration of live deer in protected environment so limited access to being tested.)

Banning anything is a feel-good measure only, makes it appear the government is doing something.

Slowing the spread is a punch line at parties for bureaucrats while they apply for Federal Grants using taxpayer funds.

Meanwhile Destroying Deer VS Genetic Diversity is ignored and parallel between CWD and scrapie in sheep and the genetic solution for it is being ignored and not funded by any game and fish

department.

The Nation's leading Chronic Wasting Disease Scientist.

Before you decide anything, you need to watch and then watch again and listen.

History will show this to be a pivotal moment in hunting history.

<https://youtu.be/O8Y6x38hmX0?si=7PwYqka81GcplU9t>

The nation's leading chronic wasting disease scientist explains how left-wing political scare tactics have gotten in the way of curing the problem.

Chris Seabury, a veterinary professor at Texas A&M University

Mammalian molecular genetics, genomics, and population genetics; animal disease genomics; utilization of population and quantitative genetics to elucidate host loci and relevant variation influencing differential susceptibility to disease, adaptability, and feed efficiency; next generation sequencing and de novo genome assembly as a mechanism to enable novel research programs in non-model mammalian and avian species of interest.

Ph.D. in Genetics, Texas A&M University - (College Station, Texas, United States) 2004

M.S. in Biology, Sul Ross State University - (Alpine, Texas, United States) 2000

B.S. in Zoology, Sul Ross State University - (Alpine, Texas, United States) 1997

Do your own research!

You need to deep dive. – Is destroying deer doing more harm than good?

The connection between sheep and deer at research facility no one wants to talk about.

First Documented Origins of CWD but was it the first - When deer were kept with sheep in Fort Collins Colorado research facility in the 1960's, run by the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Colorado University.

Classical Scrapie in Sheep Research – Sound familiar!!

Sheep get Scrapie they and they destroy the herd in culling activity!

Completely clean facility and left it sit for years!

Then they were repopulated with sheep that had zero scrapie!

All the new Sheep ended up with disease again!

There is currently no treatment for scrapie!

There is currently no treatment for CWD!

Scrapie is a fatal, degenerative brain disease that affects sheep and goats.

CWD is a fatal, neurodegenerative disease that affects cervids (deer, elk, moose).

So, what are we doing? Testing then Destroying, Testing then Destroying. Name one game and fish department trying to find away out of this madness!

Scrapie in sheep is primarily controlled through a combination of genetic selection to breed for naturally resistant animals, rigorous surveillance programs to identify infected flocks, and immediate depopulation of infected herds, with the primary focus on identifying and removing genetically susceptible sheep from breeding populations, alongside strict cleaning and disinfection practices on affected farms; there is currently no treatment for scrapie, so eradication relies on preventing further spread through management practices and genetic selection.

Research into genetic markers of sheep. 251,000 genetic markers of sheep.

Some genetic markers are more susceptible than the other genetic markers.

No. 2. Destroying Deer VS Genetic Diversity VS Hunting Season VS Genetic Diversity

By killing off large portions of a population you decrease genetic diversity. Genetic diversity and variability are the keystone elements to genetic adaptability, herd immunity and natural selection. The agencies and their Biologist would be lying if they denied such knowledge. Doing such decreases the vigor of the herd and sets the herd up for catastrophic losses.



Please accept this written testimony in **opposition of SB2137** relating to the **use of supplemental feed for hunting**. I have worked as a wildlife health professional for 23 years and my considerable experience in this area indicates that supplemental feeding for hunting is not warranted. As a hunter myself, I am concerned about the willingness of the legislature taking up this bill that should be left to the experts within the wildlife management agency, North Dakota Game and Fish, to know what is best for the natural resources in their states. Provided below are the supporting conditions for why I oppose this bill:

1. Given the nature of disease transmission, attracting animals to a specific location by use of supplemental feed increases the likelihood of pathogen spread. Animal congregating in artificially high densities can spread diseases. Animals sharing a pile of corn, bucket of apples, mineral block, or other attractant can leave behind viruses, bacteria, and prions that can infect other animals using that same resource, even if they do not have nose-to-nose contact. Think about a restaurant's salad bar – there is a sneeze guard and tongs so that the person in front of you doesn't leave behind any germs that you may pick up.
2. I study chronic wasting disease in deer and have seen firsthand how difficult it is for states to detect this disease. My surveillance plans found the first cases of CWD in Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida. It is extremely difficult to find this disease and allowing supplemental feeding just promotes diseases spreading even faster than it would naturally. Bait piles contribute significantly to increasing contact between deer. Prions remain infectious when left behind in urine, feces, and saliva, which are found in higher frequency around bait piles.
3. In addition to increasing risks of spreading CWD in deer, there are a number of other animals that also use these human-provided sources of feed. These could include things like raccoons that could increase the incidence of rabies, as well as the ticks on these animals that spread Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses. Birds may be attracted to feed and come closer to domestic livestock and human habitation than would normally be expected, which could present opportunities for spillover of highly pathogenic avian influenza to other species such as cats, cattle, and humans.
4. Supplemental feeding increases the wildlife production beyond what the natural environment can support. Therefore, if feeding is stopped, there isn't enough natural forage to support the extra animals. This creates an unfortunate situation where once feeding starts, it cannot be stopped easily.
5. Hunting wild game is acceptable to the majority of the public, including non-hunters. However, hunting over bait is not considered "fair chase" by many people and could decrease support among the public. Landowners may look at hunters unfavorably and not allow access to their land.

As the trustees over the natural resources and the good people of North Dakota, I hope you will see that this bill is misguided in its attempt to offer greater opportunities to hunters and may ultimately hinder hunting for current and future generations.

*Krysten Schuler*

Krysten Schuler

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee members,

My name is Wyatt Stanley and I've been an avid outdoorsman in North Dakota for the last 20 years. My first deer ever harvest was with a bow over a bait pile. That bait pile was a tool that I used at a young age to be able to take an ethical shot, at a known yardage I had been practicing at. I have helped 8 youth fill their tags the last couple years and would like to continue to do so, and if baiting is a tool I can use again, I would like to use our stands to help get youth into archery hunting. I feel like after helping kids practice shooting, and then being able to place a bait pile at that same yardage, it is a very valuable thing to keep kids entertained and help them take that ethical shot. Deer are naturally herd animals... between spending time in bachelor groups in the summer, or congregated in the winter, or using the same food plot or scrape as other deer, they have contact with a number of other deer year around, and the data that has been released by the department does not back that a baiting restriction has helped slow the spread.

For these reason I Support SB 2137. Thank you, Wyatt Stanley

Please pass SB 2137 the numbers from the tested deer dont added up to the CWD narrative that is being pushed.

Dear committee I urge you reccomend a DO PASS on SB 2137 if CWD truly was alway fatal and got spread over feed piles the deer herd should be wiped out by now since deer herd up over feed and hay yards every winter.

Please vote yes on SB 2137

Dear members of the Senate Ag committee, I ask for a do pass vote on SB 2137.

I believe the ability to supplementally feed year-round is beneficial to North Dakotas deer herds, and I believe having to stop during archery and rifle season (we live in restricted 3A2) is actually hurting our herds health.

Being able to use minerals and high protein sources of feed helps bucks be less run down after the rut, along with giving all deer more energy/fat reserves to make it through winter months. If I can provide supplemental feed all the way through, I won't have to start after it is almost too late post archery season. Those extra months of supplemental feed might give those deer the extra boost to save even a small percentage of winter killed deer in North Dakota. I ask you to look out for North Dakotas deer herds health for both the present and the future. If we don't have a herd to protect in 20 years, what is it worth trying to stop a disease that might POTENTIALLY be an issue. In the last 15 years herd numbers have reduced from the ability to support 149,000 deer tags to 55,000. This is almost a 200 percent reduction in deer living on the landscape, with little hope of getting substantial habitat back to support a large growth trend. If we continue this trend, what will future hunting opportunities look like? Let's give the herd every chance we can in the present. Even helping 5% of the herd survive with supplemental feed through a winter/starvation makes a difference, especially with the snowball affect going into the future.

Help keep our deer herd numbers up where my children will have the opportunity to enjoy the sport I grew to love with my dad, and am watching my children grow to enjoy with their father.

I ask for a do pass vote on SB2137.

Thank you, Alison Thompson

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I am in favor of SB 2137. This is not a feeding/baiting bill. We can already feed wildlife anywhere, any time during the year. This is about weather we can pull the trigger over 'said' feed. We want to remove this hunting restriction.

Thank you,

Angie Kunkel

Granville, ND 58741

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I am in favor of SB 2137. This is not a feeding/baiting bill. We can already feed wildlife anywhere, any time during the year. This is about whether we can pull the trigger over 'said' feed. We want to remove this hunting restriction.

Thank you,

Scott Wittmayer

Granville, ND 58741

3/5/2025

Written testimony in support of SB 2137

Dear Energy and Natural Resource Committee members,

I encourage all of you to support this bill.

My family has hunted in this state for multiple generations. For many years we have used feed to allow our young hunters to make ethical shots in a controlled environment. This gives them a chance to harvest game with less risk of wounding the animal. Those with physical limitations also have a better chance of providing themselves and their families with a great food source.

Deer herd up in the winter, it has been that way since they have inhabited our state. It will not change, and we cannot stop it. It makes no sense not to allow hunters to use this method to harvest game.

Please keep in mind that the overwhelming majority of constituents support this bill.

Respectfully,

Shannon Hanson

12101 54<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW

Burlington, ND 58722

Please vote yes on SB 2137 after over 20 years of testing for CWD in ND less than one percent have tested positive I dont call that a pandemic or buy the hype of how contagious it is end these hunting restrictions and pass this common sense bill.

Thanks

To Members of the House Energy and Natural Resources

I am writing in opposition to the SB 2137. Managing our states wildlife should be done by our N.D. Game and Fish Dept. and not by voters at the ballot box. I know there is some angst between some groups in the state and the Game and Fish Dept. but I feel that is between them to work out for the betterment of the States wildlife. By taking away some of the tools that the N.D. Game and Fish have to manage our states wildlife as best as they see fit I feel sets a dangerous precedent for our states future along with future North Dakota generations.

In Opposition to SB 2137

I Thank You

Ryan Bauer

Committee members I ask that you reccomend a DO PASS on SB 2137. More deer have died in ND because of the game and fish when they killed 50 deer just to test (all came back negative) than CWD has killed.

In regards to SB2137, a bill relating to the use of supplemental feed for hunting. As an avid outdoorsman and landowner I would strongly urge you to vote yes. Currently supplemental feeding is allowed for any activity except during the act of hunting. As an outdoorsman I find this very confusing as we are told this is done to prevent the spread of CWD. I personally feel that our ND game and fish has not proven that this ban provides substantial mitigation pertaining to CWD or the prevention of CWD. I also feel strongly that CWD is not what has created a decline in our deer population in recent years , instead I feel EHD and hard winters have been to blame. Yet we hear nothing from ND game and fish about these. I also feel the use of supplemental feed does help overall herd health during harsh winters . As a landowner I feel it is an overreach by the ND game and fish and goes against property rights. Many groups who oppose this say it is not the legislatures job to intervein as many of you are not experts. I feel this would have not had to come to you if ND game and fish would be willing to work with the people. I feel we've tried to have our voices heard but we can not compete with special interest groups that ND game and fish continually listens to with an open ear. Many of us are just your average North Dakotan who wants to see our deer herd thrive so that we can continue give opportunities and pass down our hunting traditions and heritage to the next generation. Even if your don't hunt please consider how hunting season positively impacts the small town economies. As we see our deer herds devastated by EHD and die of from starvation during hard winters it decrease opportunity for ND outdoorsman and women which has a negative impact on our state. I disagree the legislature should not get involved because we elect you to represent us on issues just like this. ND game and fish director is an unelected position and really has no responsibility to answer to the people and the people have no recourse if they have an issue or concern. I feel that is exactly why many of us are asking you approve this measure. I would ask you to support this bill and give the people of ND a voice in this matter. Simply put the act of supplemental feeding is legal statewide, we just want the ability to hunt over said supplemental feed. This bill does not hinder the NDGNF resources as supplemental feeding as mentioned is already allowed statewide any time of the year. Thank you Travis Jensen

To Whom It May Concern

RE: SB 2137

Please vote yes on SB 2137.

Thank you,

Doug Thorp

SB 2137

Please pass SB 2137.

Thank you.

## Support of SB 2137

Chairman Porter and Members of House Energy and Natural Resource Committee my name is Chris Jorde. I am a lifelong North Dakota Farmer/Rancher, Landowner, Sportsman, and Wildlife Service Business Owner from Towner. I am asking for a "Do Pass" on SB 2137 for the following information. I first became involved back 2009 when the Legislature took up a bill that wanted to ban the feeding of wildlife in ND. I remember testifying in front of this same committee; some of which members today with familiar names and faces were also present. That bill was a very well attended and gathered a large amount of testimony from both sides of the topic. At the end of the bill, "We The People" spoke loud and clear and the bill passed which continued the feeding of all wildlife in ND. Shortly after the outcome of this bill I developed a business plan and grew a successful business (Heart J Outfitters) in which I offered my hunting services as well as access to land that I farmed and ranched on. My business took off because of good planning as well as the ability to harvest and feed the wildlife that were being pursued. Many sportsman from all across the country made their way to get a taste of what the great ND wildlife had to offer them. Many of these sportsmen spent money for the higher non-resident fees and were happy to support the ND economy. I did a very good job of promoting ND as a tourism destination and even worked with the ND State Tourism Department to attract business at out-of-state hunting shows. The business was very successful for many years because of the services that I offered and the appreciation I showed to them visiting and spending money in our state until 2021. In 2021 the hunting unit that I conduct business in had a hunting restriction put on it for the reason of being in close proximity of a CWD detection. This inability to no longer hunt over feed that I could place for the wildlife that the 2009 Legislature protected caused my business that I had successfully operated for many years plummet! Sportsman no longer wanted to come to ND that had previously had the ability get close to the wildlife and make ethical archery shots consistently! My business took an 84% drop in bookings because of this restriction! Talk about a substantial financial hit to me but also a hit to the ND economy! So I ask all of you today; Do economics and revenue to the State of North Dakota matter to you? I think they do and I still promote the State of ND tourism and try to attract business to my business that allows me to spend my dollars in our local communities large and small to survive! I would hope that you would consider what this hunting restriction has done to my business as well as the ND economy!

For these reasons I would appreciate a "DO PASS" on SB 2137!

I will stand for any questions. Thank you for your time and ability to share my personal story with you!

Christopher Jorde – Heart J Outfitters, Towner ND

### Testimony in Support of SB 2137

I, like many other sportsmen in North Dakota, are very passionate about hunting. Spending most of my spare time educating myself by observing deer or reading about them. Deer health is always a top priority to ensure a bright future for our sport.

Deer constantly like to be congregated and are very social animals. Making direct contact by communicating through licking branches and grooming one another. All this exposure naturally takes place year after year.

The data I have read shows in the past twenty years there have been 40,000 harvested deer and tested for CWD. In that time frame there have been 70 positive cases. Out of these 70, 69 were harvested deer and only one of them was a deer that was found dead. That is less than one percent of the tested deer testing positive for CWD. There have been living deer that are nine years old that test positive for CWD. This is double the age of the average deer in ND. Other states that have CWD and much higher funding for research continue to allow supplemental feeding on private property. Yet they continue to have steady population numbers nor huge outbreaks. The numbers in all the current and past research do not add up to needing restrictions on supplemental feeding.

Currently you can use supplemental feed if you want to get pictures but not if you have a weapon in your hand. Theories and speculation are taking away rights of hunters. Supplemental feeding should be a choice that is optional to all hunters. To limit educated, health conscious hunters who are trying to add nutrition to a deer's daily diet does not make sense to me.

Using supplemental feed could get more elderly and disabled people involved in the sport. It is a great way to get young hunters outdoors and let them enjoy watching wildlife in a close proximity. Another advantage is it helps position deer for a more ethical shot placement. It would be great to implement a proactive management plan where we can help aid in our deer herds diet. In my opinion there are more pros than cons to this argument.

There is not enough factual data to justify not allowing hunting over supplemental feed. I would appreciate it if you could reflect on what I have said and give back to sportsmen who are trying to enjoy their sport.

Please vote yes on SB 2137.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Jordan Dahle

To: House Energy and Natural Resources

My name is Wade Williamson and I reside in Parshall, ND. I am a retired farmer and have hunted my entire life. I've also spent many thousands of dollars every year in maintenance of wildlife and creation of habitat. I ask you to support **Senate Bill 2137**.

Some of the reasons that I ask you support of this bill are:

1. The NDGF cannot prove that baiting of deer contributes to the spread of CWD. It is their assumption!
2. If baiting is so bad, why do they still allow feeding of wildlife and support food plots?
3. It is impossible to keep deer from congregating, they do it naturally every year.
4. Most of the CWD is in the mule deer herd and they do not respond to bait.
5. In most areas of North Dakota whitetail hunting with archery equipment is almost impossible without bait.
6. By eliminating baiting on private land you almost make it impossible for older hunters or physically challenged hunters to be able to hunt with any degree of success.
7. As a landowner who loves wildlife and dedicates a lot of time and money to their maintenance I really take offense to the NDGF telling me what I can do on my own land! Believe me, if I thought baiting caused or spread CWD I would not support this bill. I still support that the NDGF can determine what they want on public land.
8. This bill had tremendous support in the House last year but I believe because of some political shenanigans by the Governor and the Director of the NDGF it was killed in the Senate.
9. Please look through the smoke and ask about CWD funding as I believe this issue has a lot to do with money and therefore becomes political.

Thank you for your consideration and please support Senate Bill 2137.

Wade F. Williamson

My name is Scott Mortensen. I am a long time bow hunter and resident of North Dakota. I am asking for your support of SB 2137. I am a father and I am trying to get my kids interested in bow hunting. Being allowed to hunt over a bait pile makes the sport much easier to get kids excited to go out and see deer/critters up close. The entire state is allowed to place feed at any time but the restrictions placed on hunters is not warranted.

Thank you for your time,

Scott Mortensen

8375 38<sup>th</sup> St NW  
New Town, ND 58763

**To our government leaders in North Dakota  
Regarding 69<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly. SB 2137**

Dear Senate, House Energy and Natural Resources Committee Members and Voters,

I am writing to you as a concerned landowner and hunter in North Dakota regarding the 69<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly's SB 2137. This bill poses a significant threat to the effective management of our state's wildlife. It undermines the expertise of our dedicated wildlife management professionals who are educated in the science of our local habitat and wildlife needs. It infringes on my rights when neighbors who use bait to lure animals who live on my property to go to these huge bait piles and feeding stations.

The use of feed for baiting causes wildlife to congregate unnaturally, significantly increasing the risk of disease spread. While some argue that this bill protects landowners' rights, it greatly infringes on my rights and the rights of ethical hunters who do not bait animals with truckloads of feed.

If you are truly committed to safeguarding our environment, ensuring safe hunting for future generations, preventing disease spread, ethical hunting, and protecting the property rights of ALL people who live in North Dakota, we must prioritize banning the use of large amounts of bait and feeding stations. There are so many better options for hunters and landowners.

I urge you not to pass any section of this bill that permits hunting over large amounts of supplemental feed or bait. Also, do not take away the authority to protect our big game animals to the educated staff who know the science of wildlife management.

Do not pass this bill. Our wildlife, natural resources, our state, and our landowners deserve better.

Sincerely,

Sunna Olafson Furstenau

701-200-1694

[Sunna@IcelandicRoots.com](mailto:Sunna@IcelandicRoots.com)

4715 Woodhaven St. S.

Fargo, ND 58104

Reccomend a DO PASS on SB 2137

I support SB 2137 please vote YES and pass this bill

Dear Representatives,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill #2137.

Sincerely,

Greg Kolstad

Brittany Donaldson

Darlene Kolstad

I am writing in opposition to the use of supplemental feeding for hunting. With our state already having chronic waste, this will highly increase the risk of the spread of this disease. Feeding will create a high concentration of deer and other wildlife in feeding areas and create a high risk for the spread of chronic waste and other diseases. This could greatly affect the health and mortality rate of wildlife in our state. Supplemental Feeding is not a natural cycle for wildlife.

Doug Wendel

Horace ND, Resident

SB2137

As a North Dakota sportswoman and biologist I am writing today in opposition of SB2137. SB2137 will strip away the ND Game and Fish Department's ability to manage wildlife species within our state to the best of their ability with the best available science. A foundation of wildlife management that has withstood the test of time is the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. That model has guided successful wildlife management using seven principals. One of which is "Managed by Science". Meaning the best available science should be used as the base for making informed decision. SB2137 would do the opposite.

I am requesting a DO NOT PASS on SB2137.

Rachel Bush

## House Energy and Natural Resources Public Hearing

### Testimony on SB 2137

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Members of the North Dakota House of Legislature, my name is Matthew Maldonado. I am voicing my opposition to Senate Bill 2137 that would remove authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF) to restrict hunting over supplemental feed. The bill would take away one of their tools to manage disease in the state and could have massive ramifications on more than just hunters.

My love for the environment started when I was growing up, fishing and hiking with my grandfather any chance I had. I did not begin hunting until I was older, but after my first hunting trip I was hooked. Hunting and fishing trips with my friends and family represent some of my favorite memories looking back. I am aware, however, that many of these trips would not be possible without tireless work by the state game and fish departments. NDGF's dedication to protecting, conserving, and enhancing wildlife populations is what allows hunters to experience the same great memories I was lucky enough to have. Removing the ability of NDGF to actively manage wildlife populations could have lasting consequences on both wildlife and jeopardize our valued hunting culture in North Dakota well into the future.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) represents one of the largest threats to white-tailed and mule deer populations in North America. The disease is 100% fatal, passes primarily through contact, and can even survive in the soil for several years after being shed by the individual. There is currently no cure for CWD, meaning if the number of infected deer in North Dakota continues to increase, there could be massive losses in deer populations. Is this what hunters want? Decreased hunter participation is already a concern at the national level. Is approving actions that directly decrease the deer population in North Dakota the best way to increase hunter participation? Even from an economic perspective, arguing that NDGF cannot ban baiting, and therefore manage the spread of CWD, could cause massive losses in the economic value of hunting in North Dakota. Arguing that NDGF cannot actively protect, enhance, and conserve deer populations in North Dakota will only lead to decreased deer populations, decreased hunter participation, decreased economic value, and could result in future hunters being unable to enjoy the formative experiences I had.

I ask that you to vote no on Senate Bill 2137 to allow NDGF to follow their mission of protect, conserve, and improve deer populations so that deer populations remain healthy for future public recreational opportunity.

Thanks for your time,



Matthew Maldonado

3-6-2025

Written Testimony in support of SB 2137

Members of the Committee

I am writing today in support of SB 2137. I have lived in North Dakota my entire life, started hunting with my family before I could even walk and started carrying a BB gun with my father pheasant and deer hunting not much after learning to walk. To say hunting and conservation is a way of life for me is an understatement. I have hunted countless states in America, and 7 different countries throughout the world. To say I have been involved in conservation debates throughout those travels is an understatement. I have been extremely proud throughout the years with the work our North Dakota Game and Fish has done.

When the debate of supplemental feed was brought up and how it was increasing the spread of disease it really sparked interest. I have spent countless hours researching and have looked at ways other countries and states concur "proven" disease. Only putting a ban on pulling the trigger over a bait pile is not truly going to help if they believe it is causing the issue. It would need to be extended much further than that. Common feeding lots, feeding cattle without high fences around them, not protecting grain, corn, bait piles the list goes on and on. If they are only going to outlaw pulling the trigger over bait it proves that they have an agenda over hunting over bait.

I own and hunt multiple farms throughout the state and on all of them we farm, add food plots, supplemental water, supplemental food, nutrient licks, and even nutrients in the water. If we do this 365 days a year it is legal, yet if I or one of my kids grabs their bow and sits in a stand over it it is illegal. To me that is a huge issue, that is the game and fish having an issue over something that should be a moral decision by each hunter.

Much like Africa and other areas of the world and country hunting is a huge economic driver for small town North Dakota. If you drive by the 12-room hotels in the 200-person towns 9 months out of the year there is a couple cars in the lot, if you drive by in the heart of deer season they are booked solid. Giving hunters every tool in their toolbox is important.

I fully support SB 2137 and I along with my entire family would suggest and appreciate a DO PASS.

Mike Svaleson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Svaleson', with a stylized, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the name.

I support SB 2137 and ask that a recommendation of DO PASS be made. The numbers don't back up the claims that are being made about the CWD hypothesis.

Committee members my name is Gabe Thompson I ranch and farm in NC ND. I am a grandfather as well as a former instructor in our youth archery club introducing hundreds of kids to archery and the sport of bowhunting and I am asking for a do pass on SB 2137

You will be asked by the opposition to let the experts do their jobs...so lets take a look at those experts track record ..

Back in 2009 as the NDGF and these same opponents to SB2137 attempted to ban all feeding of wildlife we were told by the "experts" if that bill was not passed diseases like CWD would decimate the deer herd ... the legislators listened to the people and the bill failed and feeding was allowed ... we then watched the deer herd grow despite their fear mongering to a point they had to give out 149,000 tags and still couldn't decrease it until mother nature did through a bad winter and starvation and tens of thousands of deer died

Jump forward a decade from that starvation die off ...feeding has been going on every year since 2009

The NDGF can only attribute 1 deer dead with CWD in the wild in 16 years by their own admission ...as they convince people not to place supplemental feed

But 3 winters ago another winter mortality event that killed 50% of the states deer herd (40-50,000 deer by the NDGF own admission) the NDGF refused to partner with local wildlife clubs to help feed deer to get them through that winter and now because of those losses we are down to 55,000 tags ( almost a 200% decrease) and they say they want to ban supplemental feeding completely ...as sportsmen opportunities decline dramatically

1 deer dead to CWD in the wild

Literally tens of thousands of deer dead to starvation and winter related malnutrition stress ... by the GF own admission

The "experts" have literally gotten everything wrong in managing our states deer herd

SB 2137 is simply about not restricting hunting over supplemental feed

Please keep even more hunter opportunities from being taken away by regulation from an unelected, unresponsive govt agency by supporting SB 2137 with a do pass

Thank you

Gabe Thompson

House Energy and Natural resources members,

I ask for a Do pass on this SB2137.

75% of testimony uploaded on this bill from North Dakota residents is IN FAVOR of this bill.

I urge you to follow along with the citizens of North Dakota and vote Do Pass on SB2137.

Thanks,

Kim Thompson

To: House Energy and Natural Resources

I am truly frustrated with the NDGF Department's political agenda regarding the baiting of deer. According to them not baiting will slow the spread of CWD. Wow. Deer are going to "group up" during the winter months. They always have and always will. I wonder if it was coincidence or intentional that the "baiting ban" happened about the same time that our state's deer population was hit hard with EHD/Blue Tongue. I believe some people think they are one and the same. They are not. There is no proof that supplemental feed increases the chance of CWD and, obviously, having a deer blind next to supplemental feed is not a CWD issue.

I also take offense that the NDGF thinks they are so important that they can tell me what to do on my land. I own land in Mountrail and McKenzie counties. North Dakota landowners and sportsmen are the caretakers of the land and wildlife. Not the NDGF.

Please consider landowner rights, the unnecessary culling of deer trying to find a positive CWD case, and the NDGF selling way too many doe tags after EHD recently annihilated our deer herd and vote in support of SB 2137.

Cindy Williamson

Dear members of the House Energy and Natural Resources committee, please support SB 2137. To me, this ban on hunting over bait to help to prevent the spread of CWD is a sham. It is pretty obvious to me that if I can legally bait deer for photography, or other viewing, but it's illegal to harvest a deer over the same bucket of corn, this ban is NOT based on science. If not based on the science, what's driving this? Money? Control? Ethics? I wonder...

In the last 33 years my wife and I have scrimped, saved, and sacrificed a lot to arrive at the finish line. We've spent lots of money to end up owning 900 acres. We've spent tons of family time and money building hunting blinds, planting food plots, and planting trees.

We've also spent hundreds and hundreds of hours hunting with our children, our grandchildren, extended family, and friends. Many many times we've crowded five or six into a blind at the same time. The days being spent visiting, playing cards or games, doing homework, eating, and watching for deer. We've harvested hundreds of deer, without losing any, and millions of memories. Hunting with family and friends is Sacred to us.

A few years ago the NDGF banned hunting over bait in the two deer hunting units where we own land.

We bought into the CWD scare in the beginning. It ends up CWD and the WUHAN flu have a lot in common. Money and control through fear mongering. When the bait ban was enacted we changed our hunting activities. We went from well devised plans on focusing on trigger control, shot placement, and herd management, to the old run and gun style of hunting. You know, get up a few minutes late in the morning and do the Chinese fire drill to get into the pickup parked at the back end of the driveway. Drive around and shoot at anything legal. Long shots, running shots, whatever, blah blah blah. What a disappointment. So, for example, this past fall 2024 my family and two friends had 10 buck tags in unit 3A2. They all filled. Lots of gas wasted, 3 deer hit, and not recovered. What a joke. What an epic failure! The most memorable deer harvested was about as rewarding as cheating against your grandmother to win a game of whist, or lying to my priest at confession...

The last weekend of deer season this past year one of my grandchildren came up to me and said, this isn't really hunting anymore is it grandpa. I assured her that this was not. I promised her that from this day forward we will never shoot at a running deer, we will never shoot a rushed shot, and we will recover every deer that's been shot.

I'm just saying this, I'm done being controlled. From this day forward, I'm going to do it my way, even if it is over a bucket of corn..

I am in favor feeding wildlife. I feed all year.

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

I support passage of SB2137

I am in favor feeding wildlife. I feed all year.

Testimony in OPPOSITION of SB2137 – Relating to prohibiting the use of supplemental feed for hunting

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 2137 of the 69<sup>th</sup> legislative assembly. This bill would strip authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish to implement their CWD Management Plan by prohibiting the Game and Fish from banning baiting practices. Just like the 2023 baiting bill (HB1151) I view this as ballot box biology.

I personally have a huge problem with legislation or ballot initiatives that seek to restrict or control the ability of the wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties. Duties that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations, and as stated in Article XI, Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution, *“Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be **forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good.**”*

This bill would effectively undo over 15 years of management by the North Dakota Game and Fish to slow the spread of CWD. Since the first CWD positive deer was found in 2009, the department has spent 6 million dollars on 500 hay yard projects for landowners, to help keep animals from congregating on silage piles, hay yards, and other alternative food sources.

Research in Saskatchewan, Michigan, and Mississippi has found that man placed food sources represent by far, the largest aggregation of cervids and leads to the most focal contact with their environment. In other words, there is no activity that congregates deer more, putting them in direct contact with other deer and potentially contaminated environments, than artificial food sources. More than natural winter herding, natural food sources, bedding, and even breeding behaviors.

I understand that baiting bans alone will not stop CWD, that deer do naturally congregate, and some of those natural occurrences will never be a variable managers can control in wild animals. But I also believe it is disingenuous to suggest that hundreds of bait piles and feeders on the landscape, being replenished repeatedly throughout the year, does not directly exacerbate the spread of CWD.

I urge you to strongly oppose SB 2137.

Thank you,

*Steve Goroski*

Bismarck ND

701-391-2665

ND Sportsman and resident of this state

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

I support passage of SB2137

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

I support passage of SB2137

House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

I support passage of SB2137

Members of the House Energy and Natural Resources committee, I ask for a do pass on SB 2137.

I have deer hunted my entire life and love to archery hunt more than anything. I have always used supplemental feed up until our unit became restricted. Our yard in the winter can hold up to 600- 700 deer. Overall, due to our livestock feed and us supplementally feeding to provide for wildlife over winter, it seems the deer herd in our yard has better survival rates then the other herds in the area we're not able to help as much. I think this restriction that the game and fish put in place hurts more then it helps.

Please support the sportsmen of North Dakota (80% in favor testimony) in allowing hunting over supplemental feed.

Please vote do pass on SB 2137.

03/06/2025

Hello Energy and Natural Resource Committee members,

I am writing to voice my support for SB 2137. The “scientific” argument does not add up, especially since the Game and Fish doesn’t even follow their own recommended management practices. This begs the question: Are we fighting a disease? If so, how serious is it, really? Or is the NDG&F just trying to stop hunters from hunting over wildlife feed? The NDG&F has made their stance known about the ethics of hunting over feed and how they do not agree with it from an ethical standpoint, they will not admit it now because of the negative attention it drew to them, but they made it known in their testimony over a previous bill that was a major topic of discussion a decade or so ago.

Please help protect sportsmens rights and vote yes on SB 2137. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Goodman  
Minot, ND

Members of the house energy and natural resources committee My name is Matt Seykora. I reside in Bottineau North Dakota. I am here today to show my support for Senate bill 2137. I am here today to not only speak on my own behalf of not only myself but also for my lovely wife and my four wonderful children who are all very avid outdoors, men, and women. I live and also hunt in a unit that falls within baiting restrictions in place by the game and Fish department. Because of a detection within 25 miles of my unit is the reason for the restriction.

In 2023 the game and Fish department had two units fall within the parameters of restriction with a positive case within 25 miles. Those units would be 2K one and also 3B2 at that time the game and Fish did not put out the proclamation until shortly before the season with that being said they decided to pause those units for the 23 season.

Moving forward into 2024 we had three more units in the north eastern part of the state units 2E2D and 2C also have detections that would brought them into the proximity range for restriction. The game and Fish comes back again and decides to pause those three units as well.

With that being said those five units add up to over 20,000 mi.<sup>2</sup> of the state of North Dakota. The state of North Dakota in total is just under 71,000 mi.<sup>2</sup> in total. Nearly 1/3 of the state. Not only with the pausing of those five units keep in mind two of them for two years and the other three for another year they have gone against their own regulations and their own hypothesis based science for a disease with a .2 prevalence rate.

As per legislation in 2009, the entire state is allowed to supplemental feed wildlife at any time at any place on private property. Lets not stay away from the fact that this is not a feeding of wildlife issue. This is a hunting restriction. This is a subject that the game and Fish is supposed to help preserve the hunting heritage of family friends and the making of new friends in the state.

Along with testing and restriction and over \$1.5 million spent on CWD in the state. What results do we have except for testing and restriction? This was sold to you in the last legislation that this was an epidemic that was going to decimate our deer herd. As we now have found out thats not true. The biggest killer in our deer herd is EHD and also starvation. I dont believe CWD would even make it into the top 10. My wife with her suburban has officially killed more deer in the state then CWD has. Haha

We supplemental feed deer all year round which intern doesnt keep those deer just on that property, but theyre able to get the nutrients and make it through rough winters and be in better shape to theyre able to fawn in the spring. It also creates more opportunity for others because those deer dont reside there all year. A lot of us live and breathe everything we can do for wildlife.

At this point it feels as if the game and Fish has taken their fingers off the pulse of the sports men and women in the state. We live on the landscape, but when it comes to spring and fall advisory board meetings, those ideas are brushed off because we dont have a degree that suits the narrative or the agenda and or better yet the federal funding.

In closing this is about lifting a hunting restriction on private lands and turning it into law. It will no longer be rules or guidelines that can be twisted and manipulated to fit certain agendas. I would appreciate your support and a do pass on Senate bill 2137.

Hello Senate committee members,

01/16/2025

I am writing to you in support of SB 2137. I question the science that the game and fish is stating that they are using. They do not even follow their own protocols when it comes to enforcing a baiting ban for units within close proximity to a positive case. Why would they do this? They claim that it is in the best interest of the deer to control CWD, but units close to large populations of hunters, they have refrained from implementing the baiting restrictions...this sounds very politically driven to me.

Also, with talk of CWD as a threat to deer herds, why isn't there any discussion regarding EHD and the effects it has had on our deer herd over the past few years. This disease can wipe out a large population of deer in just a few weeks, not like CWD which supposedly takes a couple of years from its infection to kill its host. Where is the funding and research for this awful disease that has killed more deer in North Dakota in one year than CWD has killed throughout the majority of the United States? Evidently this is about more than supposed disease prevention, it is obviously about Ethics and Federal funds available to the NDG&F.

Please vote yes on SB 2137. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Brent Wollschlager  
Parshall, ND

I am in support of SB 2137. In the last 2 years not only has the game and fish gone against regulations but also their own science. Example would be pausing restricting 2 units for 2 years and now 3 units this year. I believe this bill will help the game and fish as far landowner relations moving forward. With that brings more access for all residents. This is not a baiting bill, this is a bill to remove a hunting restriction. I feed deer almost year round which by law I can. I believe with the supplemental feeding that I have done over the years has saved quite a few deer in some very harsh winters.

Respectfully, James Seykora

## Opposition to Senate Bill 2137

SB2137 would severely handicap the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's ability to manage deer populations and deer hunting procedures with the best available science. The proposed Bill removes authority from the ND Game and Fish Department to issue rules or adopt a policy or practice prohibiting the supplemental feeding on private property for hunting of big game animals. The Bill is a direct attempt to undermine chronic wasting disease (CWD) management efforts in the state and will have a detrimental impact on managing other diseases such as bovine tuberculosis that would impact the state's livestock industry as well.

CWD is a fatal neurological disease affecting cervids like deer, elk, and moose. It has been shown to significantly reduce deer populations in affected areas, as it always leads to death in infected individuals. The disease disrupts population dynamics and could cause long-term ecological consequences if left unchecked. CWD is a major threat to the deer population in North Dakota and should not be taken lightly.

The ND Game and Fish Department has personnel equipped with specialized knowledge, experience, and resources necessary to monitor and manage CWD effectively. This agency has the expertise to conduct surveillance and research, and to control measures tailored to local conditions and ecosystems, which is all vital for containing the spread of the disease.

Deer populations can be infected with bovine tuberculosis which can move from deer to cattle. Effective state-led wildlife disease management helps minimize these risks by implementing targeted surveillance, controlling deer populations in high-risk areas, and coordinating with agricultural agencies to protect livestock and local economies.

I respectfully ask you for a DO NOT PASS on SB2137

In favor of senate bill 2137.

I am writing in regards to SB 2137. I am opposed to this bill and offer the following reasons for this opposition. First as a long time hunter in North Dakota in excess of 55 years, I have always respected and relied on the North Dakota Game and Fish (G&F) to manage and protect our fish and wildlife resource. I believe they have the personnel and expertise to effectively manage our fish and wildlife and they have not proved me wrong in 65 years. To hamstring this agency by restricting them in their ability to regulate and control wildlife diseases is unconscionable and grossly misguided.

I will also speak to this proposed legislation as a landowner. I do not believe I own the wildlife on my land, and am a strong proponent of the North American Model of Wildlife Management which states that wildlife is held in trust for the people of the state of North Dakota. As a landowner, I cannot do anything I want on my property. I cannot drain water onto my neighbors land, I cannot ignore and fail to spray noxious weeds which potentially spread to neighbors property, I cannot construct a facility which pollutes or destroys the environment and pollutes groundwater or surface water. In the same way I should not be allowed to bait deer when it will have negative impacts to the free ranging wildlife we all own. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is real and is one of the greatest threats to our deer herd in this country. The G&F only restricts baiting in units with CWD or adjacent units within a predetermined proximity to the CWD positive. We cannot stop natural congregation of deer or even interaction of deer. However we do have the means to control unnatural congregation of deer due to baiting. This is a reasonable and effective approach to controlling CWD. North Dakota currently has low prevalence of this disease and the reason for this low prevalence rate is the proactive approach G&F has taken to control this disease.

I am asking you to please oppose SB 2137 and keep the Game and Fish Department in charge of all aspects of wildlife management. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.

I am writing in regards to SB 2137. I am opposed to this bill and offer the following reasons for this opposition. I am a mother of 2 boys and a lifetime resident of North Dakota. My husband and I own land in North Dakota and our family has hunted this land since we have owned it. We have worked to provide habitat for wildlife by planting thousands of trees and setting land aside for wildlife. Even though we work to improve habitat, we in no way believe we own any wildlife. In the same way we do not believe we have the right to do something which would have negative affects on wildlife which many North Dakotans have come to love and appreciate. I do not support the baiting of deer for the reason that it unnaturally congregates deer and will increase the probability of disease transmission, especially Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).

My son has a degree in Fishery and Wildlife Management and as a family we have always supported the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. This department has always demonstrated a commitment to manage our fish and wildlife to benefit all North Dakotans. The Department has professional dedicated staff that is far more knowledgeable than anyone in this legislature to manage our wildlife and use science based management to control diseases such as CWD.

I am asking you to please oppose SB 2137 for the future of hunting and wildlife in North Dakota. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.



House Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
Testimony on SB 2137

North Dakota Game and Fish Department  
Dr. Charlie Bahnson, Wildlife Veterinarian  
March 7, 2025

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Dr. Charlie Bahnson. I serve as Wildlife Veterinarian for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (Department).

The question at hand is whether the authority to restrict hunting over supplemental feed should lie within the Governor's proclamation. The Legislature has considered this question before. Bills in 2007 and 2009 would have banned baiting statewide. Last session, HB 1151 would have legalized it statewide. All three bills failed, with the sentiment being that the flexibility afforded to Game and Fish, through Governor's proclamation, is the best way to manage a wildlife disease issue.

The thrust of our argument today is that management flexibility is important to preserve. That was demonstrated by our in-state carcass movement restrictions. As the distribution of CWD changed, we shifted to allowing movement within the state but requiring disposal via landfill. This works better for hunters, taxidermists, and meat lockers, but it still manages risk.

Although HB 1151 failed last session, the Department still took it as a call to readdress the issue. We worked with policymakers and stakeholders to form new guidelines for when to recommend applying or removing baiting restrictions based on surveillance data. For example, restrictions were in place in unit 2B and now they currently are not. The new guidelines are a compromise which strikes a more responsive balance between managing disease risk and respecting the preference of those who enjoy baiting for big game.

As Wildlife Veterinarian, I'll argue that it is an important tool. There are lots of wildlife diseases, all of which we are concerned about. Some also have implications for people or livestock -- things like brucellosis or bovine tuberculosis. If either of those diseases were to become established in our wildlife populations, it would be devastating for our livestock industry because you'd have continued risk of spillover from one to the other, threatening export markets. This has occurred in other states. Should either of these be detected, baiting restrictions would be foundational in limiting how much it spreads among wildlife and how big of a problem it becomes. Proclamation leaves this tool on the table.

The Department currently employs this tool in approximately half our hunting units to combat a specific threat: chronic wasting disease. This is a serious disease that we hope to keep rare in North Dakota. Under high infection rates, it will become another major driver of population

effects with recreational impacts. From our work with colleagues who manage western herds heavily infected with CWD, I can share that these impacts are not theoretical. They report fewer deer, disappearance of older age classes, lots of calls to come euthanize sick, neurologic animals, and fears from hunters of handling and consuming infected animals. We don't want this in North Dakota. We need the flexibility and responsiveness afforded through proclamation to combat it.

We're not dismissing how important baiting is to a lot of people. As a lifelong hunter, I can understand why some are upset. If baiting has been a part of how you hunt for years, it's hard to imagine hunting without it. When I go into the field, I want as much leeway as possible to hunt in my preferred style. However, regulations are in place to protect the resource - the resource that we all share. It is in everyone's interest for the deer herd to be as healthy as possible, for the good of wildlife, people, and livestock in this state.

Ultimately, the Department does its best to navigate some sort of middle ground on this issue, balancing the wishes of those who enjoy hunting over bait with the fact that both research and past agency experience demonstrate that congregating deer adds voluntary disease risk. Navigating this middle ground opens us up to criticism from both sides. We take plenty of it, but that's our job. We ask that you allow us to keep doing it.

The Governor is committed to managing this long-term disease with a commonsense approach. That requires the flexibility afforded through annual proclamation to address a changing, dynamic issue with a changing, dynamic approach. We ask you vote for a "do not pass" on this bill.

To whom this concerns,

I am taking a few minutes to write up a testimony in support of SB 2137.

This bait ban has yet to directly affect me as it's not in my unit but I can see the writing on the wall. I know that's just a matter of time and a personal agenda for some of the employees to see baiting gone will affect my kids and my bowhunting.

I will make this short and sweet....If you take away baiting in my opinion you take away alot of opportunities for the average blue collar guy in ND. We have seen how hunting is slowly shifting to a rich man's sport. People with lots of land will probably still have plenty of opportunities and possibly even more with a statewide bait ban. People who don't own land will struggle to kill whitetails in ND. Not to mention this will eliminate a lot of disabled people from the bow hunting sport entirely. I have a cousin that is limited to a wheelchair and a few years ago when his unit was banned from baiting he sold his archery equipment. He is on disability and doesn't have a rich dad or farm land to hunt. He was extremely happy to take a doe or first buck that would come in yearly until he was told he would have to "sit on a trail or pattern deer" because baiting was no longer a tool available to him. I would like to see anyone try who says people with disabilities should trudge around in a wheelchair in 6" of snow because baiting is no longer an option to allow them to hunt. I also work hand in hand with Prairie Grit on some outdoor activities, the banning of baiting will eliminate these kids opportunities. Period!!

A neighbor who is a rancher, located south of Minot, has reached out in prior years for assistance in winter for hay... Why??? Because often he has 300-500 deer nightly in his haystacks. We are supposed to follow the Game and Fish's recommendation to ban baiting because they believe ten pounds of corn and 3-4 deer will spread CWD but a person with a bird feeder or a Haystack in the winter won't? Herding happens every winter, this isn't a new phenomenon.

Why eliminate or limit our rights because someone has a "ethics" issue.... I wish we would release all Northern Pike over 40 inches but does that mean the rest of the state should??

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and I urge you to vote yes on SB 2137.

Respectfully submitted,

Kellen Latendresse

Minot, ND

03/06/2025

Senate Bill 2137

Hello, I would like to say that I support this bill because it helps youth and elderly who cannot hunt other ways have a better opportunity to harvest a deer. Not being able to bait has caused many bowhunters to not be able to hunt anymore because they do not have a way to hunt otherwise. It is a good tool to make a good and ethical shot on deer. Please vote Yes on Senate Bill 2137. Thank you.

Otto Williamson  
Minot, ND

Chairman Porter, House Energy and Natural Resources Committee members, my name is Wyatt Thompson. I am testifying today in favor of SB2137. I will be talking about some of the question marks I have as a sportsmen and landowner of the departments experts and their science on this bill.

3F2 is the hunting unit where CWD was first discovered in North Dakota in 2009. It is made up mostly of Grant and Sioux counties.

After CWD was discovered in the unit in 2009, a hunting restriction was placed over supplemental feed. According to press releases from the Game and Fish, between 2009 and 2022 there have been 90 CWD positive hunter killed deer in North Dakota. 55 of these 90 hunter killed CWD positives have come from 3F2. This is 61% of all positive hunter killed deer that have occurred in North Dakota during this timeframe. Between 2019 and 2022 (I excluded the data from 2023 because in what was released to the press by the department it doesn't say how many positives came from each unit), 10 years after the hunting restriction was put in place, a large spike occurred. During that 4-year time frame from 19-22, 76.4% of all the positives that have occurred in 3F2 were found. Please keep in mind that this 4-year window was 10 years after the hunting restriction was put in place. Let me ask you, did this HUNTING restriction put in place by the department really slow down the spread of CWD in this unit or does this spike after 10 years cast a shadow of doubt that the restrictions did not slow down the spread, given the big spike the from 2019-2022?

After this 4-year uptick, the department then decided to move their key surveillance area to another part of the state. The opposition and "experts" from the department will stand up here and show power points from other states like Wisconsin or Colorado, our neighbors to the north in Saskatchewan, or collard deer studies where the deer is caught, tested and

even if it comes back positive is dumped back into the wild, which for how CWD is touted by the experts seems very irresponsible, but in all reality, the department had the perfect data collection point right here in North Dakota, and after this home grown data did NOT fit their agenda (the uptick came 10 years after the hunting restriction was put in place), they abandoned it and shifted their focus to data from elsewhere.

My next reason that I am in support of this bill is I came down to Bismarck in 2023 to testify in favor of HB 1151, and we listened to members of the department tell the house energy and natural resources committee to follow the “science” and listen to the experts. Just a couple short months after the experts were in committees and on the legislature floor saying to trust us and follow the science, they did not ban 2 units that fell within their 25 miles of a positive criteria. Then this previous year in 2024 they decided not to ban 3 more units in the northeast corner of the state, again ignoring their “best available science” that the department themselves puts forth. This is the second time that the department has moved away from their own science and protocols after pleading for people to follow them. Does this make it science and fact, or does it make it opinion. Why is the department able to pick and choose when to follow it, while asking the public to always trust it.

The last point that I would like to make today is on the topic of culling. In an open records request to the ND Game and Fish Department, the question was asked **what is the Number of tags (percentage) that are allocated in each unit for CWD culling per year for the past 10 years.** The response was as follows.. “We do not allocate tags specifically for "CWD culling." Numerous factors influence license numbers. We rely on aerial surveys to estimate our deer population, although these surveys are dependent on adequate snow cover, therefore, are not always possible every year. Because of this, we also rely on trend and index data collected which is derived from hunter surveys and harvest data. These include hunter observation data (number of deer seen per

hour of hunting effort during first weekend of rifle season), harvest density index, and success rates. In addition, we take into account extrinsic factors such as winter weather and disease outbreaks. We also consider social factors such as hunter comments, depredation issues, and social tolerances in regards to too few/too many deer, hunting pressure/competition, etc. We generally error toward a more liberal license allocation where CWD is established, as hunter harvest is a documented way to control prevalence and spread, but that is one of numerous factors taken into account.”

This is the most bureaucratic response possible to say “we use sportsmen for culling in CWD units” without actually saying it. The 2 units with the highest prevalence rates in the state are 3f2 and 3a1. I touched on the numbers from 3f2 earlier, and 3a1 has popped up more recently in the last few years, and also has a hunting restriction in. In the habitat summit from a few weeks ago a lady with the department stood behind a podium with the map I gave you on the screen and said this and I quote.. “if you’re wondering about those 2 units in green, this is where CWD is endemic in our deer herd, and we’re purposefully keeping deer licenses high in those units to try and slow the spread of the disease.” The department uses sportsmen to cull the deer herd, all at the cost of future opportunities of sportsmen.

In 2019 the department culled 52 deer from south of Williston because of 1 deer, the only deer in North Dakota history, that has died due to CWD. This deer was found dead and then tested positive so they consider this a death due to CWD. This culling was viewed so negatively by the sportsmen of North Dakota that it was the last time that the department did a culling themselves. Not one of those 52 deer came back positive, and the department disposed of the meat in a landfill. Now they use the sportsmen of North Dakota to do their dirty work for them. The department is using the sportsmen to over harvest deer in 3f2 and 3a1, the 2 units on that map in green. Every other unit in the state has seen tag numbers decline, minus those 2 that have increased by 20% in 3a1 and 112% in 3F2. 3F2 has such a surplus of tags they have left over,

over the counter tags. This is not managing wildlife through those things stated above like aerial surveys and hunter surveys, this is sportsman over harvesting to cull for the department and has removed more future opportunities then CWD has done in 27 years of testing in the state.

According to an article from the ND Game and fishes magazine, testing for CWD started in north Dakota in 1998 with sick and suspected animals. Even with the entire state still open to hunting over supplemental feed, it took 11 years for them to find their first positive. Since then, the units that have had baiting banned the longest in the state are the ones with prevalence rates increasing almost every year. Hunting over supplemental feed in north Dakota does not spread CWD at a rate that is worth being scared of, and the departments Hunting restriction over supplemental feed has shown it has done little to slow down CWD in 3a1 and 3f2.

In an article ran in the Grand Forks Harold just a couple weeks ago by Doug leier, an out reach biologist at the North Dakota Game and Fish department quoted Kevin Kading as saying “We recognize that many people care deeply about wildlife and it can be difficult to watch nature play out, but feeding operations, good intentions and all, can actually do more harm for wildlife than good.”

People do care deeply about the wildlife in North Dakota and it can be difficult to watch nature play out whether it be about supplemental feeding or CWD, but good intentions, even by the “experts” can do more harm then good for wildlife, especially when a department doesn’t follow their own “best available science.

I would like you to please consider a DO PASS vote on SB2137.

Thank you and I will stand for any questions.

I am writing in regards to SB 2137. As a North Dakota resident and landowner I opposed to SB 3127. I do not support the baiting of deer for the reason that it unnaturally congregates deer and will increase the probability of disease transmission, especially Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).

I have always supported the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (G&F) and feel that have done a great job of managing our fish and wildlife throughout North Dakota. The G&F Department has professional dedicated staff that is far more knowledgeable than anyone in this legislature to manage our wildlife and use science based management to control diseases such as CWD. I would implore you to allow professional biologists and wildlife veterinarians to do the job they are trained to do, manage wildlife and wildlife diseases. CWD is not a hoax and it is not something to be taken lightly. We have low prevalence of this disease because of the efforts of ND G&F to control it.

I am asking you to please oppose SB 2137 for the future of hunting and wildlife in North Dakota. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.

Dear House Energy and Resources Committee,

Please vote no on SB 2137. The legislature did the right thing last time by putting an end to this nonsense. I am almost 85 years old, I remember when there werent much for deer in North Dakota. Just seeing a deer was a big deal!

The game and fish has a tough job, but theyve done a real good job over my lifetime in managing wildlife. Almost all hunting is better now than it was when I was kid. Way more wildlife.

Let the professionals do what they were trained to do. Animals eating off bait piles is going to spread disease, this is common sense.

Thank you for your time,

Russell Wahl  
Bismark, ND

Chairman Porter and members of the Committee.

My name is Curt Francis and I am a deer hunter in opposition of SB2137. Our deer are a public trust species, owned by the people and managed by the Game and Fish Department for the benefit of all of the public.

We need to let those that have spent their careers learning about and managing wildlife make educated decisions regarding the management and health of our wildlife populations, including deer.

Management decisions regarding our deer herd should not be decided by political theater driven by narrow interests pushing manipulated information and misguided false narratives. It must rely on the expertise of our State's trained wildlife experts as well as reputable use of current and emerging science. We must afford the Game and Fish Department the tools to manage our deer for the greater good of all North Dakotans.

Theodore Roosevelt recognized there were and would be short sighted, selfish individuals and interest groups that have little regard for providing for the greatest good for the greatest number or the longevity of our public trust species, such as our North Dakota deer.

I'd like to think this committee has a vested interest in keeping North Dakota's deer herd healthy for as long as possible.

In the spirit of Teddy Roosevelt, I respectfully ask that you do not take management authority away from the Game and Fish Department and allow them to utilize the best management tools to protect our deer herd for the greatest good for the greatest number by voting NO on SB 2137.

Curt Francis  
Bismarck, ND

I oppose SB 2137, removing the authority of the department to prohibit or restrict the use of supplemental feed on private property for hunting.

It is well documented that supplemental feeding is detrimental to wildlife including big game. Limiting the authority of the Department of Game and Fish threatens wildlife resources, livestock, and public health. One of the biggest risks of feeding is disease transmission. Disease is difficult to control in free-ranging wildlife populations. Prohibiting feeding is one way to address disease outbreaks. Bovine TB, brucellosis, and CWD are all transmitted at feed sites. Bovine TB and brucellosis both infect livestock. How will the Department mitigate the effects of these disease if they cannot prohibit a major transmission source?

As a biologist with decades of experience managing cervids in 3 states, I respectfully ask that you consider the unintended consequences of this legislation and its impacts on wildlife.

I am strongly opposed to SB 2137. ND Game and Fish does amazing things in a large state and with limited funding. They know what they are doing and are fighting a new threat rising against our deer herd. This country used to pride itself on our scientific achievements. With new data are coming every day about CWD, we need to allow our wildlife biologists the flexibility to manage the herd with the best tools we have. While this may seem like a property rights issue, no one owns those deer. What happens to deer in one section can be spread to the next section, and the next, and so on. A great worry of mine is that, in a few years when my son is old enough to hunt, we won't get to experience the joy of frying up a tenderloin after his first successful hunt, but will instead have to wait for test results as to whether the deer is CWD-positive or negative. North Dakota's landscape lends itself to the potential for strong disease transmission. When we got hit with that brutal winter in 2022-2023, every shelterbelt in southeastern North Dakota had a small herd of deer, just trying to survive. While Please let the professionals do their job and protect our deer herd so that we can all hunt healthy deer.

Mike Bush

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Dear legislators,

I am writing in support of SB2137. This is about hunting, supplemental feed can already be placed anywhere in the state at any time so it makes no sense that the only time it cannot be done is when a person is hunting. The narrative that not being able to hunt over bait somehow helps prevent the spread of CWD is false. I believe that the biggest threat to the ND deer population is habitat and habitat loss, I wish we could take all the money spent on CWD and put it towards creating and improving habitat. I bet it would make a huge positive impact. Again, I urge you to vote to pass SB2137 as it just makes sense and is what the people you work for want. Thank you

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## **SB 2137**

Please oppose SB 2137. SB 2137 does not allow our wildlife managers to do the jobs that they need to do. Taking tools away from NDGF is not what is needed to best protect our shared wildlife and help them to flourish for the benefit of all North Dakotans.

Dear House Energy and Resources Committee,

I'm asking for a do not pass vote on SB 2137.

Allowing hunters to bait where CWD is present will allow the disease to spread faster, this is common sense.

Let the wildlife professionals at the Game and Fish manage the wildlife. That's what we pay them to do.

Chet Wahl  
Hazen, ND

As a North Dakota resident and hunter since the age of 9, I am opposed to SB 3127. I do not support the baiting of deer for the reason that it unnaturally congregates deer and will increase the probability of disease transmission, especially Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).

I have always supported the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (G&F) and feel that have done a great job of managing our fish and wildlife throughout North Dakota. The G&F Department has professional dedicated staff that is far more knowledgeable than anyone in this legislature to manage our wildlife and use science based management to control diseases such as CWD. I would implore you to allow professional biologists and wildlife veterinarians to do the job they are trained to do, manage wildlife and wildlife diseases. CWD is not a hoax and it is not something to be taken lightly. We have low prevalence of this disease because of the efforts of ND G&F to control it.

I am asking you to please oppose SB 2137 for the future of hunting and wildlife in North Dakota. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.

My name is Trigg Baker, a lifelong hunter in North Dakota. I'm writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 2137, which protects our rights to use supplemental feed for hunting on our own property. This bill is a win for personal freedom and commonsense. I know firsthand that hunting traditions like baiting bring families together and help manage wildlife responsibly. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department claims it's about controlling diseases like CWD, but the science doesn't fully back that up—deer can spread it just as easily without bait, and it lingers in the soil for years anyway. Why should the state dictate what I can do on my own land when the evidence is shaky at best? SB 2137 respects property rights and keeps unelected bureaucrats from overstepping. I was thrilled to see it pass the Senate 31-15 on January 29, 2025, and I urge the House to stand with landowners like me by passing it too. Let's keep North Dakota a place where we're free to hunt our way.

I am writing in opposition to Senate Bill 2137. Enacting this legislation would remove the ability for professionals to manage wildlife resources on behalf of the public. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department is charged with managing fish and wildlife resources, and if their data suggests the best management practice for minimizing disease risk in big game animals is to restrict baiting, then our family supports this action. My family trusts the North Dakota Game and Fish Department staff, their data and their decisions on this matter, and we urge you to oppose Senate Bill 2137. Thank you for your consideration.  
Kevin and Erin Kading Bismarck, ND

House Energy and Natural Resource Committee:

I write to express my opposition to SB 2137, which aims to prohibit North Dakota Game & Fish from implementing policies that prevent the use of supplemental feed on private property for hunting big game animals.

SB 2137 will eliminate an effective tool for managing diseases in free ranging wildlife and reduce the ability of NDGAF to address wildlife disease issues that emerge in game species; therefore, this bill stands against managing for healthy and sustainable wildlife populations in the state. Some diseases, such as bovine tuberculosis, could even have severe consequences for human and agricultural animal health. Feeding wild game often encourages animals to gather into larger groups for longer periods of time compared to natural animal behaviors, which increases how often animals contact one another. This type of feeding behavior subsequently increases the rate at which infectious diseases spread. This concept is well supported through research from prominent institutions such as Texas A&M University and the University of Georgia. This well-supported research is also why wildlife professionals suspend supplemental feedings to slow the spread of a variety of different wildlife diseases.

My opposition to SB 2137 is not about any specific disease. Rather, it is about making sure wildlife professionals in North Dakota have tools at their disposal to respond to and manage disease issues in the state. **Each state in the U.S. plays a significant role in maintaining wildlife populations for our nation, so all states should provide their professionals the freedom to employ tools that are proven effective in managing wildlife diseases.**

Growing up in a household that relied on fish and game for sustenance, I learned from a young age the importance of taking care of the wildlife and land around me. In short, when you take care of wildlife and the land, they in turn take care of you. Throughout my life, I have held onto this core value and continue to incorporate practices for promoting ecosystem health throughout my life, including sharing this knowledge with my growing son, who at six years old is already an aspiring hunter. This is also why I am deeply concerned about policies like SB 2137 which prevent biologists from using effective tools to protect the health of our wildlife communities and threaten future recreational opportunities.

If you value healthy wildlife populations and sustainable hunting opportunities in North Dakota, I urge the members of the Committee to reject SB 2137.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KBN', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kathryn Benavidez



**BACKCOUNTRY  
HUNTERS & ANGLERS  
NORTH DAKOTA**

**TESTIMONY OF BROCK WAHL  
NORTH DAKOTA BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS  
SENATE BILL 2137  
HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCE COMMITTEE  
March 7, 2025**

The North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers recommends a **Do Not Pass** on Senate Bill 2137 of the 69th legislative assembly. This bill would strip authority from the North Dakota Game and Fish to implement their CWD Management Plan by prohibiting the Game and Fish from banning baiting practices. Just like the 2023 baiting bill (HB1151) we view this as ballot box biology.

While our chapter does not have a stance on baiting ethics, we do have a stance on legislation or ballot initiatives that seek to restrict or control the ability of the wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties. Duties that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations, and as stated in Article XI, Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution,

**“Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good.”**

The public trust doctrine, supported by over a century of federal case law, makes it clear that all North Dakotans own the wildlife. This is codified in North Dakota Century code Section 20.1-03-03,

**“The ownership of and title to all wildlife within this state is in the state for the purpose of regulating the enjoyment, use, possession, disposition, and conservation thereof, and for maintaining action for damages as herein provided.”** and **“The state has a property interest in all protected wildlife. This interest supports a civil action for damages for the unlawful destruction of wildlife by willful or grossly negligent act or omission.”**

Our fellow North Dakotans at the Game and Fish act as our trustees and it is their responsibility to manage the public’s trust assets (the wildlife), for the benefit of the trust corpus and all beneficiaries, both alive and unborn. With that in mind, this is not a private property rights issue; this is about publicly owned wildlife, making this a public property rights issue. And the hunting practices of a single user group do not outweigh what is beneficial for the entire public resource or the beneficiaries. Allowing baiting practices to continue in the face of a contagious and 100% fatal disease is not responsible care of our wildlife assets. We believe it is not only responsible, but necessary for the department to ban baiting practices where chronic wasting disease is found.

This bill would effectively undo over 15 years of management by the North Dakota Game and Fish to slow the spread of CWD. Since the first CWD positive deer was found in 2009, the department has spent 6 million dollars on 500 hay yard projects for landowners, to help keep animals from congregating on silage piles, hay yards, and other alternative food sources.

There is no doubt that baiting practices contribute to the spread of chronic wasting disease. Infectious prions can be found in man placed mineral licks, in the soil around those mineral licks, on feeders, and in bait piles. Research efforts have repeatedly demonstrated horizontal and environmental transmission in animals that have prolonged and repeated contact with infectious materials. Research in Saskatchewan, Michigan, and Mississippi has found that man placed food sources represent by far, the largest aggregation of cervids and leads to the most focal contact with their environment. In other words, there is no activity that congregates deer more, putting them in direct contact with other deer and potentially contaminated environments, than artificial food sources. More than natural winter herding, natural food sources, bedding, and even breeding behaviors. Additionally, there are no examples of high prevalence rates of CWD within a deer herd not having negative impacts to that population. Some are less significant, others more severe and dramatic, but all impacts are negative. This is backed up by multiple population studies GPS collaring thousands of deer.

While we sympathize with the hunters this change affects, and we understand changing long held practices can be difficult, the resource must come first. With over half the states in the nation having banned baiting and feeding of wildlife, we are confident that North Dakota hunters will adapt and overcome to be successful in the field just like the other states. We understand that baiting bans alone will not stop CWD, that deer do naturally congregate, and some of those natural occurrences will never be a variable managers can control in wild animals. But we also believe it is disingenuous to suggest that hundreds of bait piles and feeders on the landscape, being replenished repeatedly throughout the year, does not directly exacerbate the spread of CWD.

While we were disappointed to see the Department's concessions over the 2023 baiting bill, we understand their desire to try and work with hunters as best they can. While the ND Game and Fish department cannot ban feeding, unless for purposes of hunting, we agree that banning baiting where CWD is found removes the incentive to feed and will also lead to a reduction in feeding. It is our stance that the department does have the legal authority to ban feeding, and we would support joining a majority of the states in the nation and implementing a feeding ban in the units that are under baiting restrictions.

This bill is not in the best interest of the deer held in public trust, or the North Dakota public hunters who are beneficiaries of that trust. The North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers finds S.B. 2137 to be in direct violation of the North Dakota constitution, the North Dakota century code, the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, the mission of the North Dakota Game and Fish, and a breach of the public trust doctrine.

**We strongly oppose S.B. 2137**

**Board of Directors**

**North Dakota Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers**

[northdakota@backcountryhunters.org](mailto:northdakota@backcountryhunters.org)



## Insight from Theodore Roosevelt

“Defenders of the short-sighted men who in their greed and selfishness will, if permitted, rob our country of half its charm by their reckless extermination of all useful and beautiful wild things, sometimes seek to champion them by saying the ‘the game belongs to the people.’ So, it does; and not merely to the people now alive, but to the unborn people. The ‘greatest good for the greatest number’ applies to the number within the womb of time, compared to which those now alive form but an insignificant fraction. Our duty to the whole, including the unborn generations, bids us restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations. The movement for the conservation of wild life and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose, and method.”



Wildlife is managed for all of the people of North Dakota, for the PUBLIC GOOD.

Article XI Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution

**Section 27.** Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good.

ND Century Code

**20.1-01-03.** Ownership and control of wildlife is in the state - Damages - Schedule of monetary values - Civil penalty.

**The ownership of and title to all wildlife within this state is in the state for the purpose of regulating the enjoyment, use, possession, disposition, and conservation thereof, and for maintaining action for damages as herein provided.** Any person catching, killing, taking, trapping, or possessing any wildlife protected by law at any time or in any manner is deemed to have consented that the title thereto remains in this state for the purpose of regulating the taking, use, possession, and disposition thereof. The state, through the office of attorney general, may institute and maintain any action for damages against any person who unlawfully causes, or has caused within this state, the death, destruction, or injury of wildlife, except as may be authorized by law. **The state has a property interest in all protected wildlife.** This interest supports a civil action for damages for the unlawful destruction of wildlife by willful or grossly negligent act or omission.

ND Game and Fish Mission Statement

North Dakota Game and Fish Department

To protect, conserve and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitat for sustained public use.

# What tools does the Game and Fish have?

- Baiting Bans
- Increased hunter harvest
- Sharpshooting/Culling
- Carcass transportation restrictions

In combating a contagious disease, what is the most effective tool?

## **ND Game and Fish Investments in fighting CWD and Winter Transmission**

<b>Biennium</b>	<b>License \$\$ Spent Landowner on depredation</b>
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<b>2009-11</b>	<b>\$1,068,000</b>
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<b>2011-13</b>	<b>\$851,000</b>
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<b>2013-15</b>	<b>\$253,000</b>
----------------	------------------

<b>2015-17</b>	<b>\$276,935</b>
----------------	------------------

<b>2017-19</b>	<b>\$689,339</b>
----------------	------------------

<b>2019-21</b>	<b>\$471,910</b>
----------------	------------------

<b>2021-23</b>	<b>\$699,528</b>
----------------	------------------

<b>2023-25</b>	<b>\$1,761,269</b>
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<b>Total \$</b>	<b>\$6,070,981 = 498 Hay yard projects from 2009 – Fall 2024</b>
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# Longitudinal Detection of Prion Shedding in Saliva and Urine by Chronic Wasting Disease-Infected Deer by Real-Time Quaking-Induced Conversion

Authors: [Davin M. Henderson](#), [Nathaniel D. Denkers](#), [Clare E. Hoover](#), [Nina Garbino](#), [Candace K. Mathiason](#), [Edward A. Hoover](#) | [AUTHORS INFO](#)

[& AFFILIATIONS](#)

## Demonstrable prion shedding in saliva post infection

**TABLE 3** Summary of IHC and RT-QuIC results for environmentally exposed CWD-exposed deer<sup>a</sup>

Parameter	Value or description	
Animal no.	E-1	E-2
Sex	M	M
Genotype	G/S	G/G
No. of positive specimens/total no. of specimens tested		
Saliva		
0 mo p.i.	0/12	0/12
3 mo p.i.	1/12	3/12
6 mo p.i.	2/12	6/12
12 mo p.i.	2/12	12/12
15 mo p.i.	2/12	9/12

Environmentally exposed cohort (no artificial inoculation)

Animal no.	PO-1	PO2	PO-3	PO-4	PO-5	PO-6	PO-7	PO-8	PO-9	PO-10
Sex	M	M	M	M	F	M	F	M	F	F
Genotype	G/S	G/S	G/G	G/S	G/G	G/G	G/S	G/G	G/G	G/G
p.i. 3 mo										
Saliva	0/8	0/8	0/8	0/8	0/8	0/8	1/8	0/8	0/8	0/8
Urine	0/8	NA	NA	0/8	NA	NA	0/8	NA	0/8	0/8
p.i. 6 mo										
Saliva	0/8	0/8	NA	0/8	0/8	0/8	1/8	0/8	0/8	1/8
Urine	0/8	0/8	5/8	0/8	1/8	0/8	2/8	NA	0/8	1/8
p.i. 9 mo										
Saliva	NA	0/8	2/8	NA	0/8	8/8	3/8	8/8	0/8	4/8
Urine	4/8	NA	NA	1/8	0/8	1/8	NA	NA	0/8	0/8
p.i. 10 mo										
Saliva	0/8	1/8	1/8	4/8	NA	NA	4/8	5/8	NA	NA
Urine	1/8	NA	3/8	4/8	NA	0/8	NA	NA	NA	0/8
p.i. 12 mo										
Saliva	0/8	0/8	5/8	3/8	0/8	1/8	0/8	5/8	1/8	3/8
Urine	7/8	NA	2/8	NA	0/8	NA	NA	NA	0/8	0/8

Orally inoculated cohort

# Very low oral exposure to prions of brain or saliva origin can transmit chronic wasting disease

Nathaniel D. Denkers<sup>1</sup>, Clare E. Hoover<sup>2</sup>, Kristen A. Davenport<sup>3</sup>, Davin M. Henderson<sup>1</sup>, Erin E. McNulty<sup>1</sup>, Amy V. Nalls<sup>1</sup>, Candace K. Mathiason<sup>1</sup>, Edward A. Hoover<sup>1\*</sup>

**Large Doses or prolonged and repeated exposure to infect deer.  
10 weeks of small doses was not enough to infect them.**

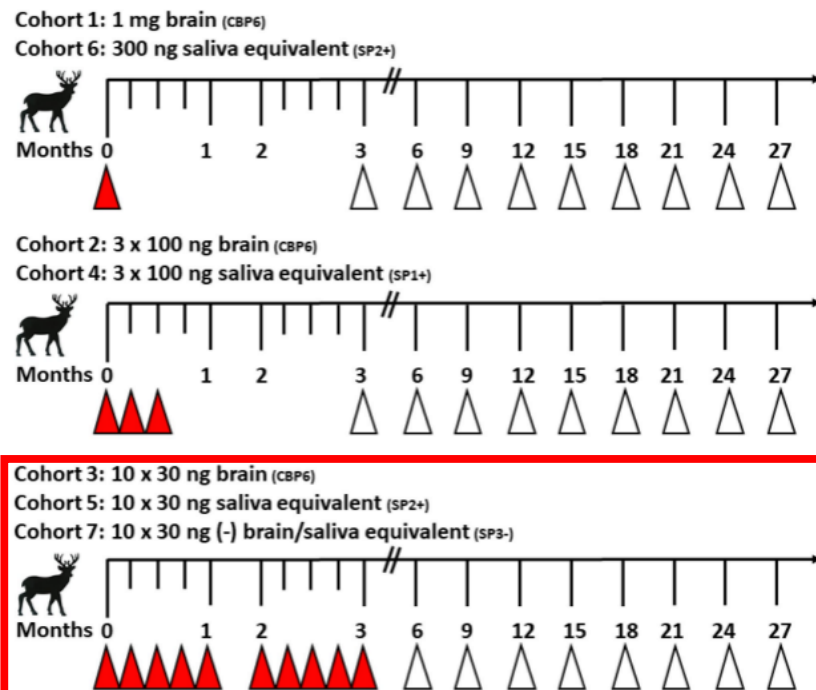
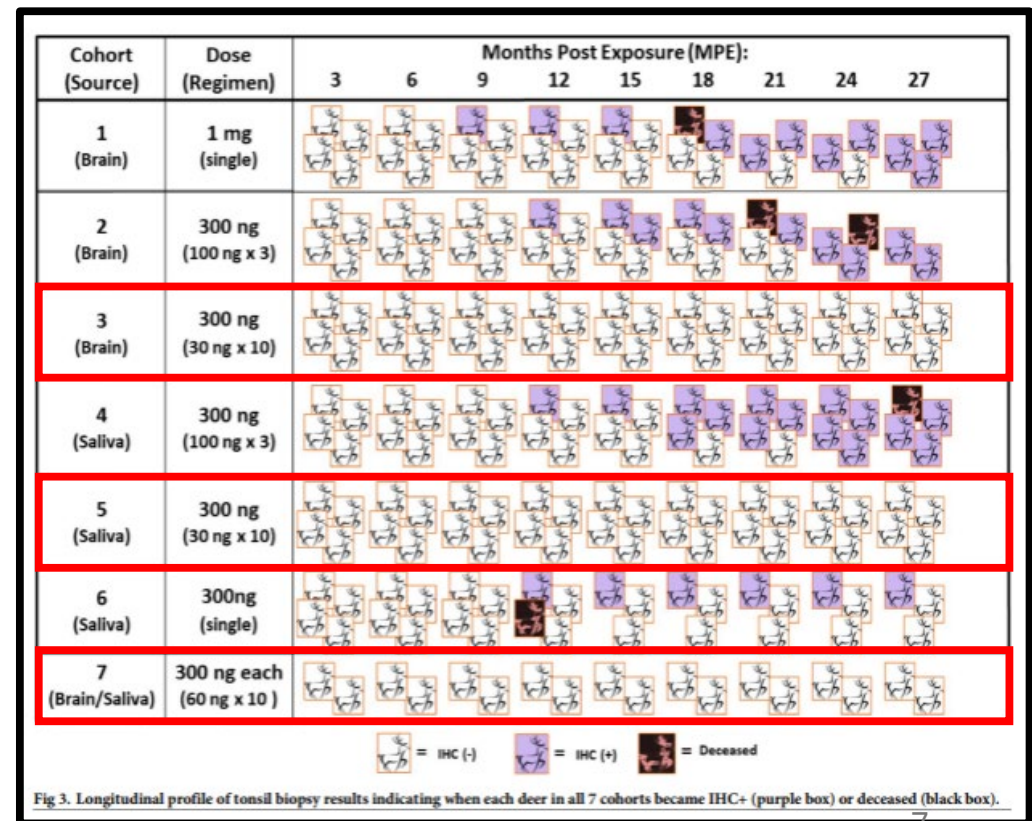


Fig 2. Experimental design of the current cohorts in this study. Solid triangles represent inoculation timepoints (0–12 weeks); open triangles represent longitudinal tissue biopsy collections to monitor for CWD (3–27 months).

**10 week/Small dose cohorts 3,5,7  
remained negative after 38-40  
months of observation.**



# Infectious Prions in Pre-Clinical Deer and Transmission of Chronic Wasting Disease Solely by Environmental Exposure

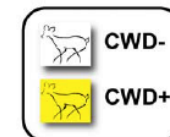
White-tailed Deer

Candace K. Mathiason<sup>1</sup>, Sheila A. Hays<sup>1</sup>, Jenny Powers<sup>2</sup>, Jeanette Hayes-Klug<sup>1</sup>, Julia Langenberg<sup>3</sup>, Sallie J. Dahmes<sup>4</sup>, David A. Osborn<sup>5</sup>, Karl V. Miller<sup>5</sup>, Robert J. Warren<sup>5</sup>, Gary L. Mason<sup>1</sup>, Edward A. Hoover<sup>1\*</sup>

**Table 1.** CWD bioassay inoculation cohorts.

Animal cohort	n	Inoculum	Route of inoculation	Dosage (total volume)	No. of inoculations
1	3	Whole blood	IV	1 (225 ml)	1
2	3	Saliva	PO	10 ml/day for 5 days (50 ml)	5
3	3	Urine and Feces	PO	90 daily doses (85 ml+112.5 gr)	90
4	2	Environmental contact <sup>a</sup>	PO	19 mos. continuous exposure	Refreshed daily for 570 days (19 mos.)
5	4	Brain	PO	1 gr/day for 5 days (5 gr)	5

<sup>a</sup>Water, feed buckets and bedding from CWD+ deer suites.  
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0005916.t001



**Saliva (cohort 2).** Each of the 3 deer in this cohort received saliva from pre-clinical CWD+ donors that were 6 to 13 months pi (Tables 1, 2). PrP<sup>CWD</sup> was detected in tonsil of 1 of the 3 inoculated deer at 12 months pi, but not at earlier time points. By 19 months pi, study termination, a second animal was CWD+, by detection of PrP<sup>CWD</sup> in brain and lymphoid tissue. The remaining deer was of necessity terminated at 16 months pi due to unmanageable aggressive behavior. This animal was CWD negative as determined by extensive western blot and IHC analysis (Figs. 1, 2).

**Environmental exposure (cohort 4).** The two animals in this cohort were exposed to daily introductions of feed buckets, water, and bedding removed from pens housing deer transitioning from pre-clinical to clinical phases of the disease (Table 1, 2). One of 2 exposed deer became tonsil biopsy PrP<sup>CWD</sup>-positive at 15 months pi. At study termination, 19 months pi, both animals were CWD+ (Figs. 1, 2).

Cohort	T <sup>e</sup> 3 mo.	T <sup>e</sup> 6 mo.	T <sup>e</sup> 12 mo.	T <sup>e</sup> B <sup>1</sup> RLN <sup>g</sup> Terminal <sup>h</sup>	n+/ total n
Blood (cohort 1)	0/3	0/3	2/3	3/3	3/3
Saliva (cohort 2)	0/3	0/3	1/3	2/3	2/3
Urine/Feces (cohort 3)	0/3	0/3	0/3	0/3	0/3
Environment only (cohort 4)	0/2	0/2	0/2	2/2	2/2
Pos. control (cohort 5)	0/4	2/4	4/4	4/4	4/4

T<sup>e</sup>=tonsil, B<sup>1</sup>=Brain at obex, RLN<sup>g</sup>=Retropharyngeal lymph node, <sup>h</sup>= euthanasia dependent upon clinical disease progression or space availability, X= animal euthanized for reason other than CWD.

# Infectious Prions in Pre-Clinical Deer and Transmission of Chronic Wasting Disease Solely by Environmental Exposure (cont.)

White-tailed Deer  
Replicate study



In summary, the results reported here reconfirm that blood and saliva are sources of infectious CWD prions, consistent with previous findings [27], and further support a mechanism for efficient CWD transmission in nature. We also show that infectious prions shed into the environment by CWD+ deer are sufficient to transmit the disease to naïve deer in the absence of direct animal-to-animal contact. These observations reinforce the exposure risk associated with body fluids, excreta, and all tissues from CWD+ cervids and suggest that similar dynamics may exist in other prion infections.

two years. The presence of infectious CWD prions in the environment therefore strongly suggests that natural prion infection occurs by routes additional to direct animal-to-animal contact. Based on the present and our previous findings [27], we speculate that saliva may harbor the greatest concentration of CWD prions available for horizontal transmission and environmental contamination, but recognize that other routes of excretion at lower concentration and greater volume still remain plausible.

## Environmental sources of CWD infection

Previous studies have confirmed direct animal-to-animal contact—horizontal transmission—as an efficient mode for prion disease transmission [9,66]. Moreover, Miller and colleagues [9,67,68] have provided substantial evidence for environmental contamination as a source of CWD infection. Our bioassay study inocula doses (50 ml saliva/deer), while efficient in establishing the infectious nature of saliva, are likely unrealistic doses to be acquired in a natural setting. To emulate a more feasible natural environment-associated dose, while negating direct animal-to-animal contact, we exposed naïve deer to repeated exposures to fomites from the suites of CWD-infected deer. The study design was meant to mirror the daily habits and movements of a deer in its natural setting in which it may return to an area contaminated with small amounts of infectious prions over time. Here we provide the first report that under controlled indoor conditions CWD-naïve deer can acquire infection by exposure to fomites from the environment of CWD-infected deer, supporting the

Cohort	T <sup>e</sup> 3 mo.	T <sup>e</sup> 6 mo.	T <sup>e</sup> 12 mo.	T <sup>e</sup> B <sup>a</sup> RLN <sup>g</sup> Terminal <sup>h</sup>	n+/ total n
Blood IV/IP	0/6	0/6	4/6	6/6	6/6
Saliva PO	0/6	0/6	3/6	5/6	5/6
Urine/ Feces PO	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5	0/5
Environ. only PO	0/2	0/2	0/2	2/2	2/2
Pos. control PO/IC	1/8	3/8	8/8	8/8	8/8

T<sup>e</sup>=tonsil, B<sup>a</sup>=Brain at obex, RLN<sup>g</sup>=Retropharyngeal lymph node, <sup>h</sup>= euthanasia dependent upon clinical disease progression or space availability, X= animal euthanized for reason other than CWD.

Figure 4. Summary of naïve deer exposed to inoculum from CWD+ deer—combined with our previous published findings [27]. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0005916.g004

**Prolonged and repeated exposure to infect deer**

**This is why bait piles are high risk.**

**Daily exposure = prolonged and repeated exposure**

# Environmental Sources of Prion Transmission in Mule Deer

Michael W. Miller,\* Elizabeth S. Williams,† N. Thompson Hobbs,‡ and Lisa L. Wolfe\*

**NO animals were artificially inoculated.**

**No injections, no transfusions, no brain homogenate, no forced saliva intake. Prolonged eating and drinking out of the same containers that CWD+ elk did.**

## Materials and Methods

We conducted a replicated experiment to compare CWD transmission from three infection sources: naturally infected captive mule deer (one infected deer/paddock), carcasses from naturally infected captive mule deer that had decomposed in situ  $\approx 1.8$  years earlier (one carcass/paddock), or undisturbed paddock environments where infected mule deer had last resided 2.2 years earlier. Each exposure source was replicated in three separate paddocks; two clean paddocks served as unexposed controls. Control paddocks and paddocks where live infected deer were

**Prolonged and repeated exposure to infect deer**

**This is why bait piles are high risk. Daily exposure = prolonged and repeated exposure**

Table. Chronic wasting disease arising in mule deer exposed to environments contaminated by residual excreta, carcasses, or other infected deer

Replicate	Exposure source			
	Infected deer	Infected carcass	Residual excreta	Unexposed
1	1/4 <sup>a</sup>	0/3	1/3	0/2
2	0/2	2/4	0/3	0/2
3	1/4	1/5	0/3	NA <sup>b</sup>
Total	2/10	3/12	1/9	0/4

<sup>a</sup>Number positive/number exposed (not including infected source deer).

<sup>b</sup>Not applicable; controls included only two replicate paddocks.

# Chronic wasting disease model of genetic selection favoring prolonged survival in Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus elaphus*)

A. L. WILLIAMS,<sup>1,†</sup> T. J. KREEGER,<sup>2,3</sup> AND B. A. SCHUMAKER<sup>1</sup>

**NO animals were artificially inoculated.**

**No injections, no transfusions, no brain homogenate, no forced saliva intake. Prolonged eating and drinking out of the same containers that CWD+ elk did.**

CWD inoculation studies have been conducted there. The TWWRU has eight, 0.2-ha elk holding pens, all of which held CWD-infected elk previous to and during this study. Elk were rotated randomly among all eight pens annually to maximize PrP<sup>CWD</sup> exposure, but were never intermingled with non-study, CWD-infected elk. Captive elk were fed alfalfa hay supplemented with a pelleted ration and provided water and a trace mineral block ad libitum. Husbandry, care, diagnostic techniques, and method of euthanasia

annually for PrP by rectal mucosa biopsy using ELISA (Spraker et al. 2009). During the analysis, 37 of 39 elk died, all of which were positive for CWD. Of those that had been examined for PrP<sup>CWD</sup> by rectal mucosa biopsy,

all elk were 27 M/M<sub>132</sub> (69.2%), 11 M/L<sub>132</sub> (28.2%), and 1 L/L<sub>132</sub> (2.6%). The genotypes of the last surviving elk were M/L<sub>132</sub> (which died in 2012) and L/L<sub>132</sub>. In 2014, the L/L<sub>132</sub> is still alive and has remained negative for PrP<sup>CWD</sup> by rectal

# Mineral licks as environmental reservoirs of chronic wasting disease prions

Ian H. Plummer<sup>1</sup>, Chad J. Johnson<sup>2</sup>, Alexandra R. Chesney<sup>3</sup>, Joel A. Pedersen<sup>4\*</sup>, Michael D. Samuel<sup>1\*</sup>

## Detection at 9 of 11 sites sampled

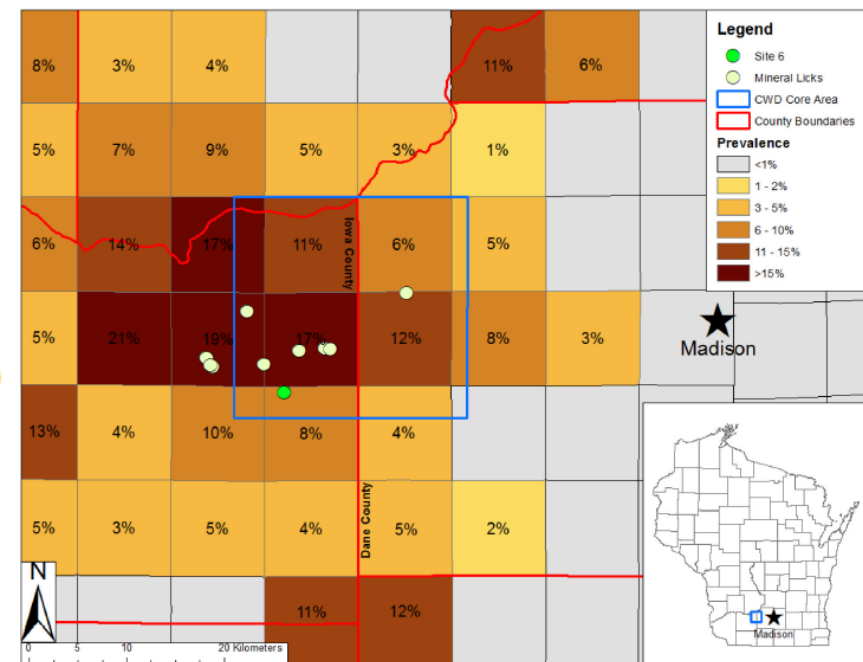
Here, we test the hypothesis that mineral licks used by deer harbor CWD prions, thus serving as potential environmental reservoirs for these infectious agents. During 2012–2015 we collected soil and water samples from 11 mineral licks (10 man-made and one natural) frequented by free-ranging white-tailed deer in a large CWD enzootic zone west of Madison, Wisconsin, USA [6] (Fig 2). We adapted a 96-well microplate variant of PMCA that

likely due in part to co-extracted inhibitors of the PMCA reaction and incomplete extraction from soil particles. The detection of prions at 9 of 11 sites sampled, however, demonstrates widespread contamination of mineral licks in the CWD outbreak zone. The generally higher

At the mineral lick site with the highest detection of CWD prions in environmental samples (Site 6), we opportunistically sampled white-tailed deer fecal pellets. We detected CWD prions in six of the 10 fecal samples after three rounds of amplification by mb-PMCA. Of eight

## Discussion

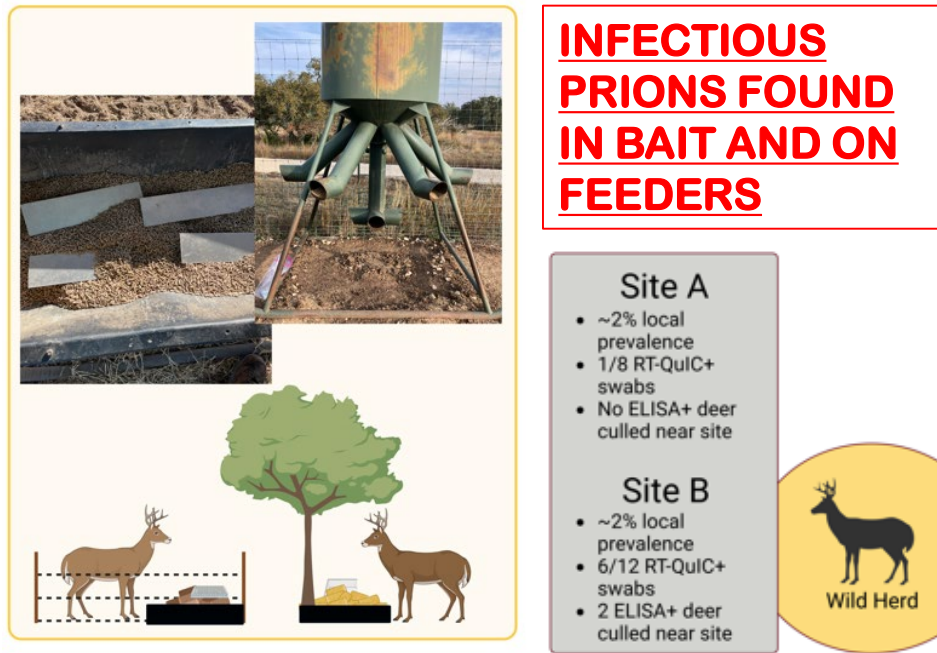
Our results demonstrate that CWD-infected white-tailed deer deposit prions at mineral licks they visit. Although the mechanism of prion deposition is unknown, we suspect deposition of saliva by infected deer during ingestion of soil and water at mineral licks has the highest potential to facilitate indirect transmission to susceptible deer. Saliva from white-tailed deer infected with CWD contains on the order of 1–5 infectious doses ( $ID_{50}$ ) per 10 mL as quantified by real-time quaking-induced conversion, where an  $ID_{50}$  is the dose of CWD prions capable of infecting half of the transgenic mice expressing cervid prion protein [48]. Frequent visitation by infected cervids could allow mineral licks to become potential “hot spots” for indirect trans-



**Fig 2. Mineral licks and chronic wasting disease prevalence.** Locations of sampled mineral licks and prevalence of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in hunter-harvested white-tailed deer from 2010–2013 in south-central Wisconsin, USA. Squares are townships of 9.66 km per side. Inset shows state of Wisconsin, USA. Site 6 denotes the mineral lick with CWD-positive fecal samples.

# CWD Sentinels: detecting environmental prion protein (ePrP) via surfaces for the early discovery of CWD

Marc D. Schwabenlander<sup>1</sup>, Catalina Picasso-Risso<sup>1</sup>, Gage Rowden<sup>1</sup>, Qi Yuan<sup>2</sup>, Erik Hildebrand<sup>3</sup>, Patrick Hagen<sup>3</sup>, Shannon L. Bartelt-Hunt<sup>4</sup>, Jason C. Bartz<sup>2</sup>, Tiffany M. Wolf<sup>5</sup>, and Peter A. Larsen<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1. A.** Sentinel surfaces placed for one week in captive deer facilities and areas with wild deer feeders/baits. **B.** Sentinels collected/swabbed. **C.** Swabs tested via RT-QuIC for CWD.

Laboratory controls of clean/unused surfaces and feed/bait components were analyzed via RT-QuIC (negative controls). Some locations had additional samples collected (e.g., water tank swabs, feeder swabs, oral swabs). Locations had variable levels of CWD prevalence.

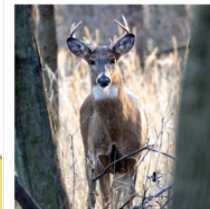
## INTRODUCTION

Scientists are developing highly sensitive chronic wasting disease (CWD) detection methodologies that utilize non-tissue samples.

Real-time quaking-induced conversion (RT-QuIC) is one such assay proven to be a more sensitive tool for CWD prior detection than current antibody-based methods (e.g., ELISA and IHC).

Similar to environmental DNA (eDNA) detection methods in aquatic and terrestrial environments, we investigated a rapid method for extracting prions from swabs of environmental surfaces to detect CWD when paired with RT-QuIC.

Laboratory investigation demonstrated that RT-QuIC detection of CWD prions recovered from surfaces (e.g., stainless steel, glass) via swabs was similar to the original CWD prior load applied to the surface.<sup>1</sup>

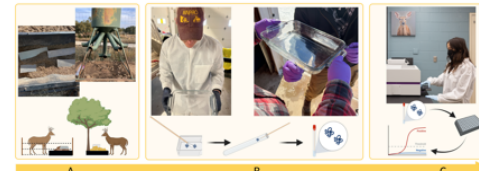


## AIM

We deployed surfaces shown to effectively bind misfolded prions as environmental prion protein (ePrP) sentinels in food sources of captive and free-ranging herds.



## METHODS

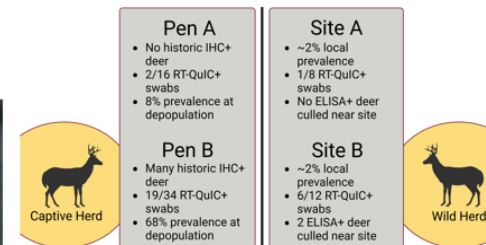


**Figure 1. A.** Sentinel surfaces placed for one week in captive deer facilities and areas with wild deer feeders/baits. **B.** Sentinels collected/swabbed. **C.** Swabs tested via RT-QuIC for CWD.

Laboratory controls of clean/unused surfaces and feed/bait components were analyzed via RT-QuIC (negative controls). Some locations had additional samples collected (e.g., water tank swabs, feeder swabs, oral swabs). Locations had variable levels of CWD prevalence.

All data are being analyzed for detection performance (e.g., run time, sample dilution) and association between environmental sample detection and CWD prevalence.

## RESULTS



**Figure 2.** Representative pens and sites demonstrating the preliminary assessment of the relationships between CWD results from sentinel swabs via RT-QuIC and associated deer tissues via ELISA and/or IHC.

## DISCUSSION

- Data collection and analysis are still in progress for all locations.
- Captive facility swab results have generally aligned with location/pen prevalence.
- Wild herd sentinel swab results and CWD positive culled deer near bait sites have been less clearly aligned, likely due to seasonal local migration patterns in the wild herd, potential for infected deer visiting multiple sites, and culling processes.
- Research indicates that low levels of prions are excreted in saliva from CWD positive deer.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, even with promising prion recovery based on the seminal laboratory swabbing method development<sup>1</sup>, it is likely in deer with early CWD infection, detection via sentinels may be limited. Additionally, deer may not test positive via IHC or ELISA on tissues but may be excreting prions in saliva at some level detectable via sentinel swabs.

## CONCLUSIONS

- ePrP detection through non-invasive methods may be used for surveillance and discovery of CWD, informing management.
- Surface sentinel surveillance may be an applicable practice for other prion and prion-like diseases in settings such as meat processing facilities and hospitals.

- Environmental factors, such as feed type, may affect results.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the facility owners and regulatory bodies for access to the research locations, collection of sentinels, and providing official CWD testing results. Figures 1 and 2 and this poster were created with BioRender.com.



## LITERATURE CITED

- Yuan Q, Rowden G, Wolf TM, Schwabenlander MD, Larsen PA, Bartelt-Hunt SL, Bartz JC. Sensitive detection of chronic wasting disease prions recovered from environmentally relevant surfaces. *Environment International*. Volume 166, 2022.
- Henderson DM, Manca M, Haley NJ, Denkers ND, Nails AV, Mathiasen GK, et al. (2013) Rapid Antemortem Detection of CWD Prions in Deer Saliva. *PLoS ONE* 8(9): e74377.

# FACTORS AFFECTING CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE PRION TRANSMISSION AMONG WHITE-TAILED DEER (ODOCOILEUS VIRGINIANUS) IN SOUTHERN MICHIGAN

## 2 year study

### 2021

10 bait sites

6 food plots

### 2022

10 different bait sites

9 food plots

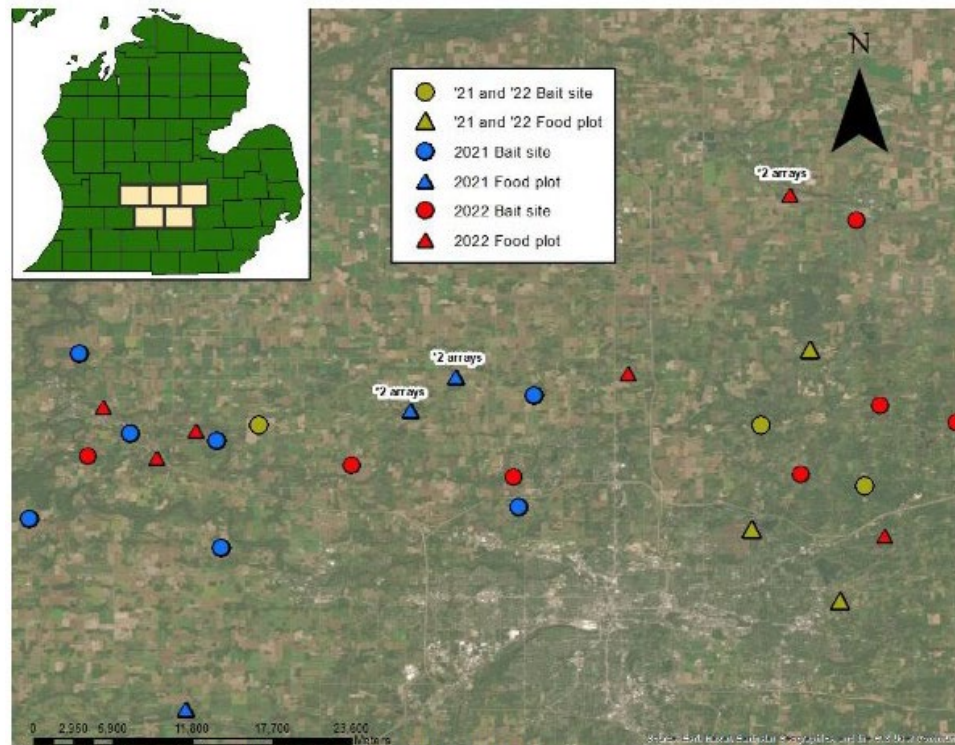


Figure 2.1 Locations of bait site and food plot camera arrays to record deer behaviors during winter (January through April) in Michigan, USA, 2021-22. Background is World Imagery layer updated in 2023 by Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics and the GIS User Community.

# FACTORS AFFECTING CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE PRION TRANSMISSION AMONG WHITE-TAILED DEER (ODOCOILEUS VIRGINIANUS) IN SOUTHERN MICHIGAN

Bait sites are consistently the highest incidence of direct and indirect (environmental) contact between deer

Table 2.3 Total number of direct, self, or environmental contacts exhibited by deer sex-age class by treatment during winter (January through April) in Michigan, USA, 2021-22. Note that multiple behavior types could occur within one 30-second segment.

Deer Sex-Age Group	Total deer observations by year		Contact Type by Year					
			Direct		Self		Environmental	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
<b>Transects</b>								
Adult Male	12	86	4	19	2	22	30	96
Adult Female	56	74	4	11	14	11	143	75
Male Fawn	24	57	6	11	7	16	65	67
Female Fawn	39	47	4	9	11	11	110	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>286</b>
<b>Bait Sites</b>								
Adult Male	201	298	132	92	26	59	646	874
Adult Female	61	355	54	172	15	92	161	967
Male Fawn	94	361	65	151	12	94	282	1,118
Female Fawn	36	225	27	120	8	67	106	631
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>1,239</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>1,195</b>	<b>3,590</b>
<b>Food Plots</b>								
Adult Male	57	48	22	3	5	3	143	97
Adult Female	42	74	28	8	4	5	118	154
Male Fawn	32	85	21	10	3	9	76	200
Female Fawn	11	67	2	6	0	5	22	129
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>580</b>

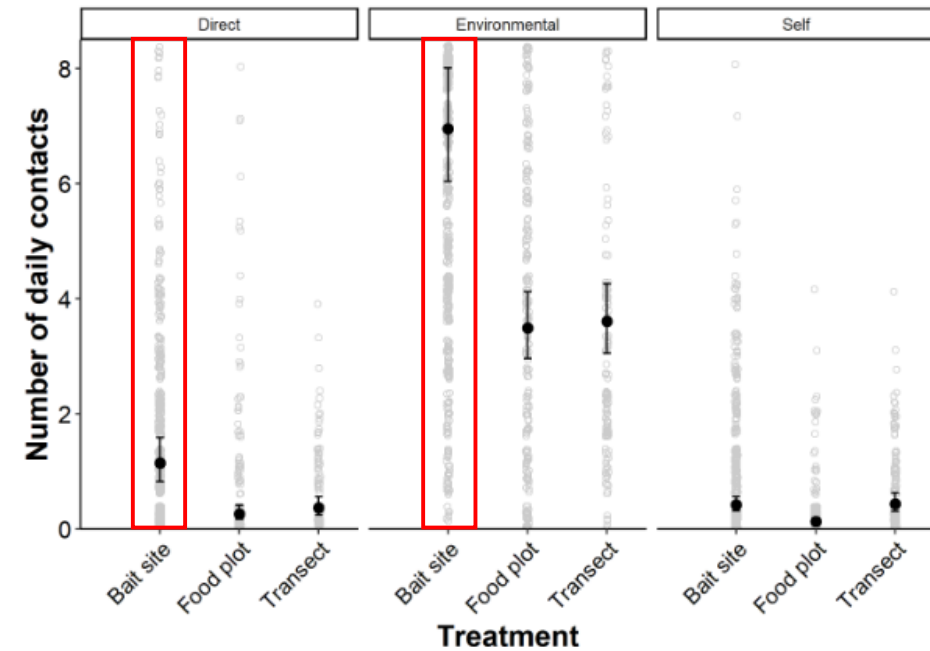


Figure 2.3 Average number of daily direct, environmental, and self-contacts among deer observed at bait sites, food plots, and transects during winter (January through April) in Michigan, USA, 2021-22. Light grey circles represent data points, and error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

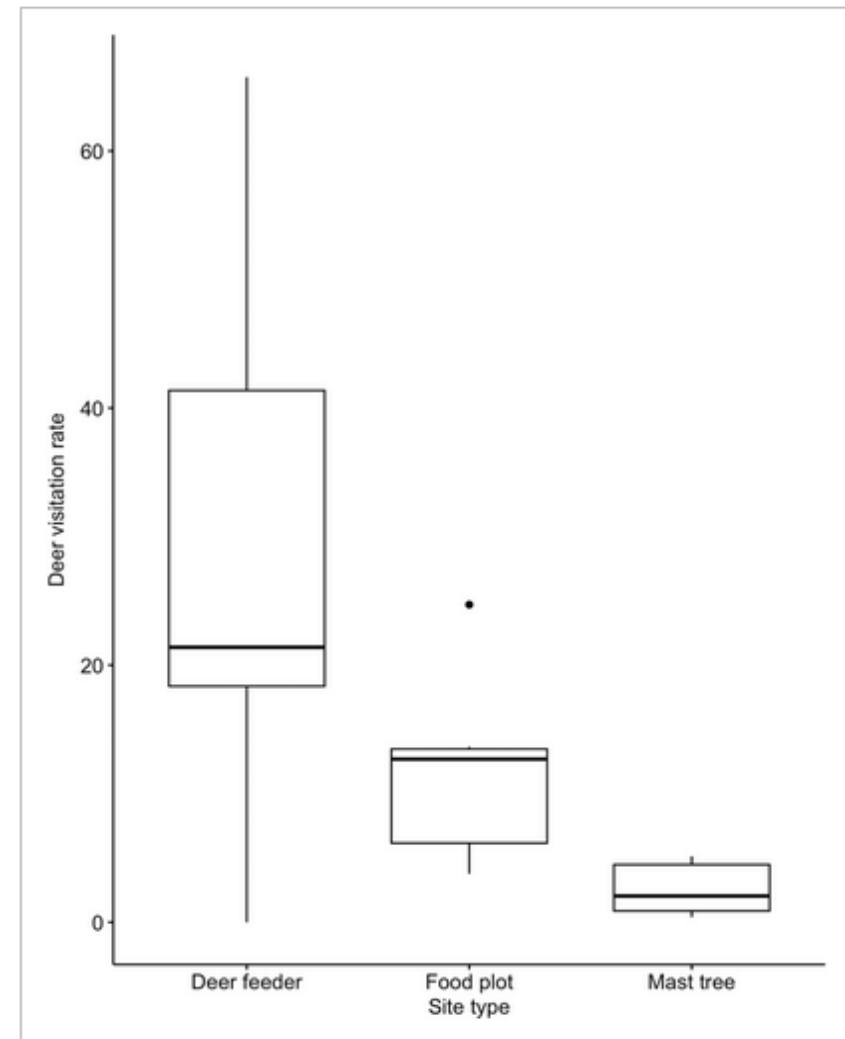
# Chronic wasting disease prions on deer feeders and wildlife visitation to deer feeding areas

Miranda H. J. Huang ✉, Steve Demarais, Marc D. Schwabenlander, Bronson K. Strickland, Kurt C. VerCauteren, William T. McKinley, Gage Rowden, Corina C. Valencia Tibbitts ... See all authors ▾

First published: 10 February 2025 | <https://doi.org/10.1002/jwmg.70000>

## 7 gravity feeders from September 2022 to March 2023 in a CWD zone in northern Mississippi

- All feeders had detectable levels of prions after 12 weeks.
- "We found that supplemental feeding increased the risk of exposure to CWD prions due to contamination of feeders, increased deer visitation, and increased deer-to-deer contact."
- "The relative risk comparison showed that almost three times more deer visited sample areas around feeders than equivalent areas within food plots. The more deer that frequent a small area, the greater the risk for CWD to spread through direct and indirect contact between those deer"
- "...near-zero deer-to-deer contacts occurring at food plots"



# Use of environmental sites by mule deer: a proxy for relative risk of chronic wasting disease exposure and transmission

MARÍA FERNANDA MEJÍA-SALAZAR,<sup>1,†</sup> CHERYL L. WALDNER,<sup>2</sup> YEEN TEN HWANG,<sup>1,3</sup> AND TRENT K. BOLLINGER<sup>1,4</sup>

July 2009 to December 2012  
365 Deer GPS collared

Research sites: 17  
salt licks,  
29 waterholes  
26 rubs  
65 bed sites  
77 browse areas 33  
grain sources 70  
trails  
53 mortalities

370 cameras  
30,377 Pictures

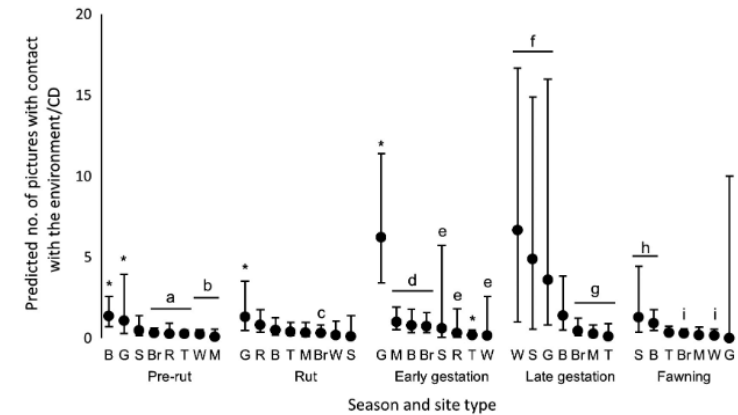
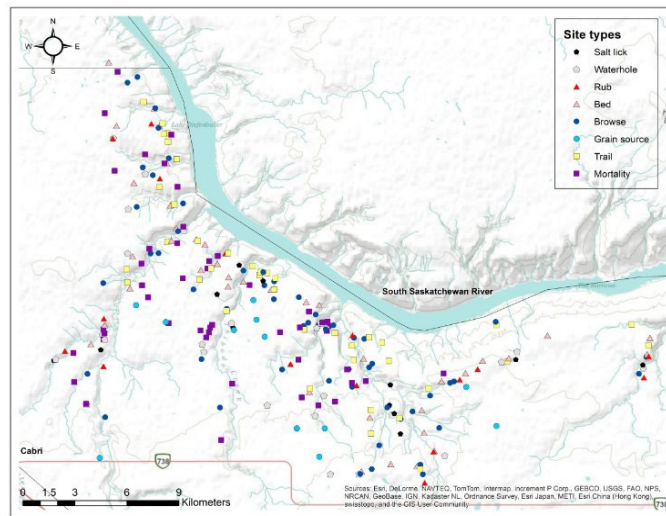


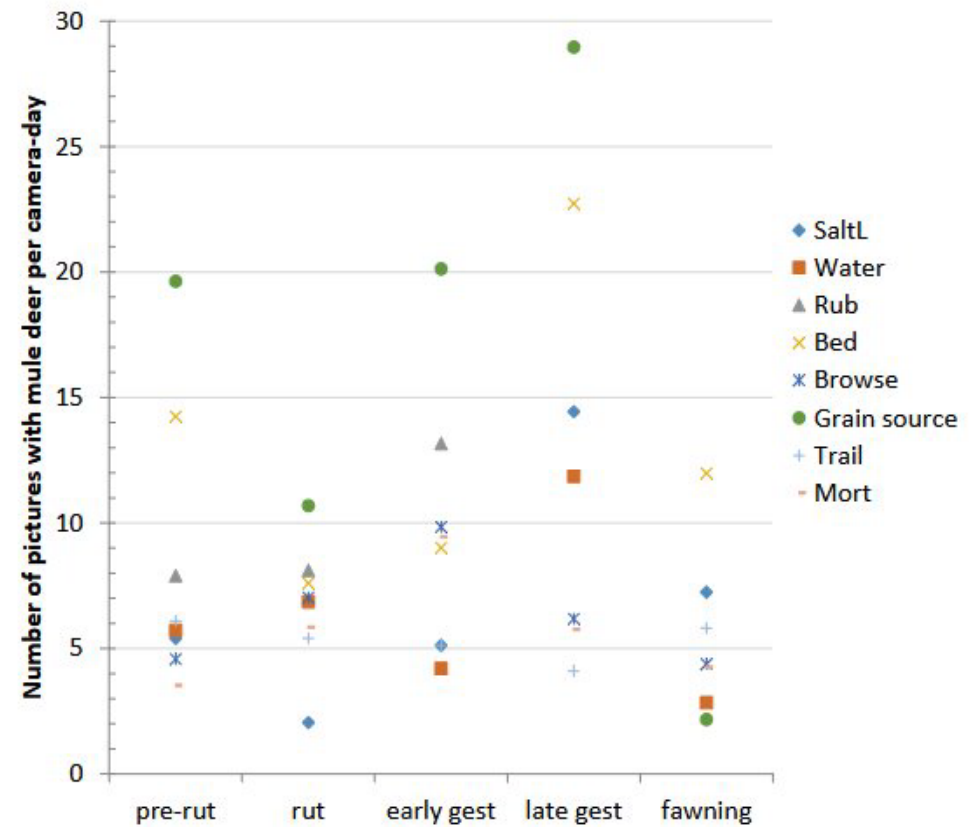
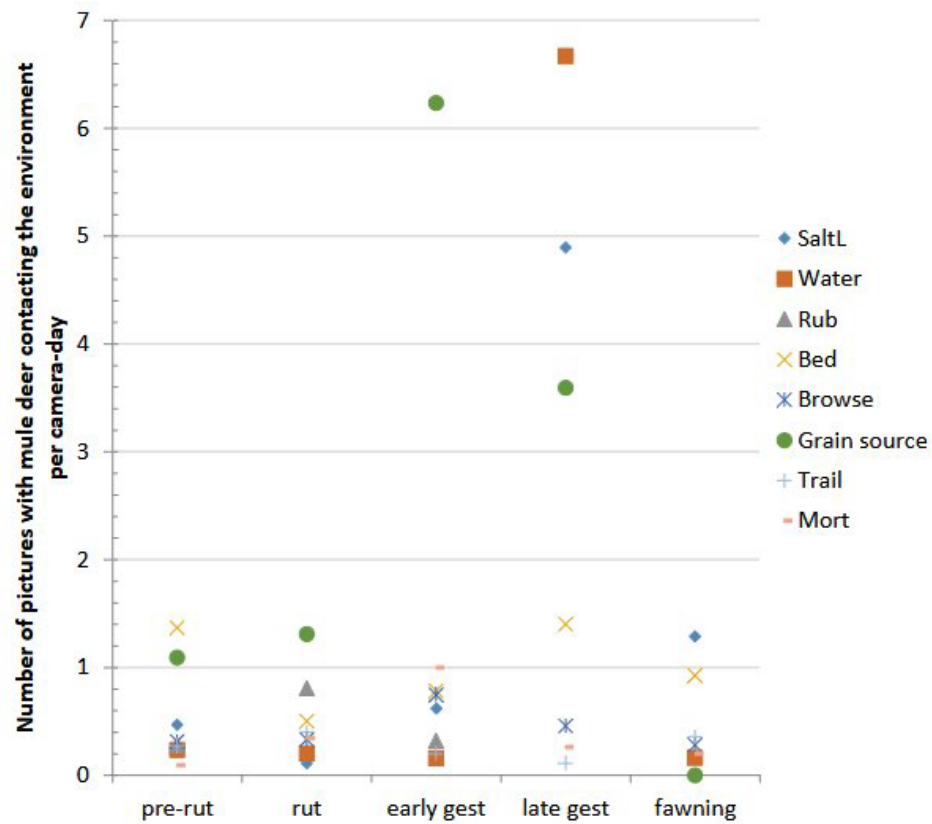
Fig. 4. Predicted number of pictures with mule deer contacting the environment per camera-day per station, by season and site type. Sites were B (beds), Br (browse areas), G (grain spills), M (mortalities), R (rubs), S (salt licks), T (trails), and W (waterholes). Rubs were not available in late gestation and fawning. Within each season, statistically significant pairwise comparisons are denoted with an \* and lowercase letters. In pre-rut, B were significantly more visited than *a* and *b*, and G were more visited than *b*. In rut, G were more visited than Br (*c*). In early gestation, T were less visited than all *d*, and G were more visited than all *e*. In late gestation, *f* were more visited than *g*. In fawning, *h* were more visited than *i*. Bars are 95% confidence interval. Upper values of W and S in late gestation, and G in fawning, were manually set at a smaller value so the rest of the values could be read in the graph; real values are found in Data S1: Table S4.

- The greatest number of pictures with mule deer per camera-day occurred at grain sources across all seasons, except in fawning, when beds were the most visited sites
- During pre-rut and early gestation, mule deer visited grain sources at least twice as often as most other sites; beds and grain sources were the most intensively visited sites
- Alternative Food sources (AFS) are highest incident rate for direct and indirect contact with other deer and environmental sites (bait piles).
  - Even higher than natural winter herding and rutting behavior.

## Social dynamics among mule deer and how they visit various environmental areas: implications for chronic wasting disease transmission - María Fernanda Mejía Salazar (PhD Thesis data)

2007-2012

365 Deer GPS collared



# Former Utah Wildlife Board member among 7 charged in illegal hunting scheme

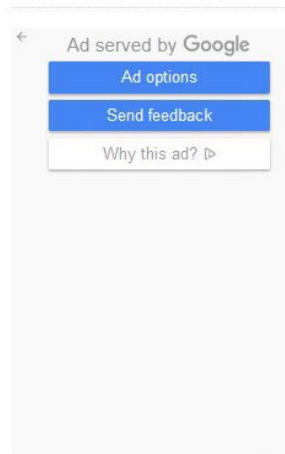
By Carter Williams, KSL.com | Posted - Aug. 23, 2024 at 7:03 p.m.



Utah Wildlife Board member Wade Heaton, left, speaks during a meeting on Jan. 4, 2022. Heaton, who resigned from the board last year, faces 11 charges tied to an illegal baiting scheme, according to court documents. (Utah Department of Natural Resources)

Most importantly to investigators, Heaton worked with his guides to lure the deer to specific locations using corn feed, court documents said. They even cut down tree limbs to improve the line of sight from deer blinds. Investigators frequently cited WhatsApp text messages from Heaton as evidence of his intentions.

"A reminder of our decision about feed ... We are going to keep the hunters as removed from it as possible," according to a text from Heaton in August 2021. "No feeding with a hunter in the truck. Keeping the feed out of sight of the public."



Two close-up shots of trophy mule deer bucks that were posted to Color Country Outfitter's Facebook page in 2023. Photos via Facebook

## Baiting Mule Deer



# Baiting Mule Deer



# Winter Herding

**We CAN stop this....**



**We can't stop this...but they are obviously not the same.**



**This is not the same...**



**As this...**

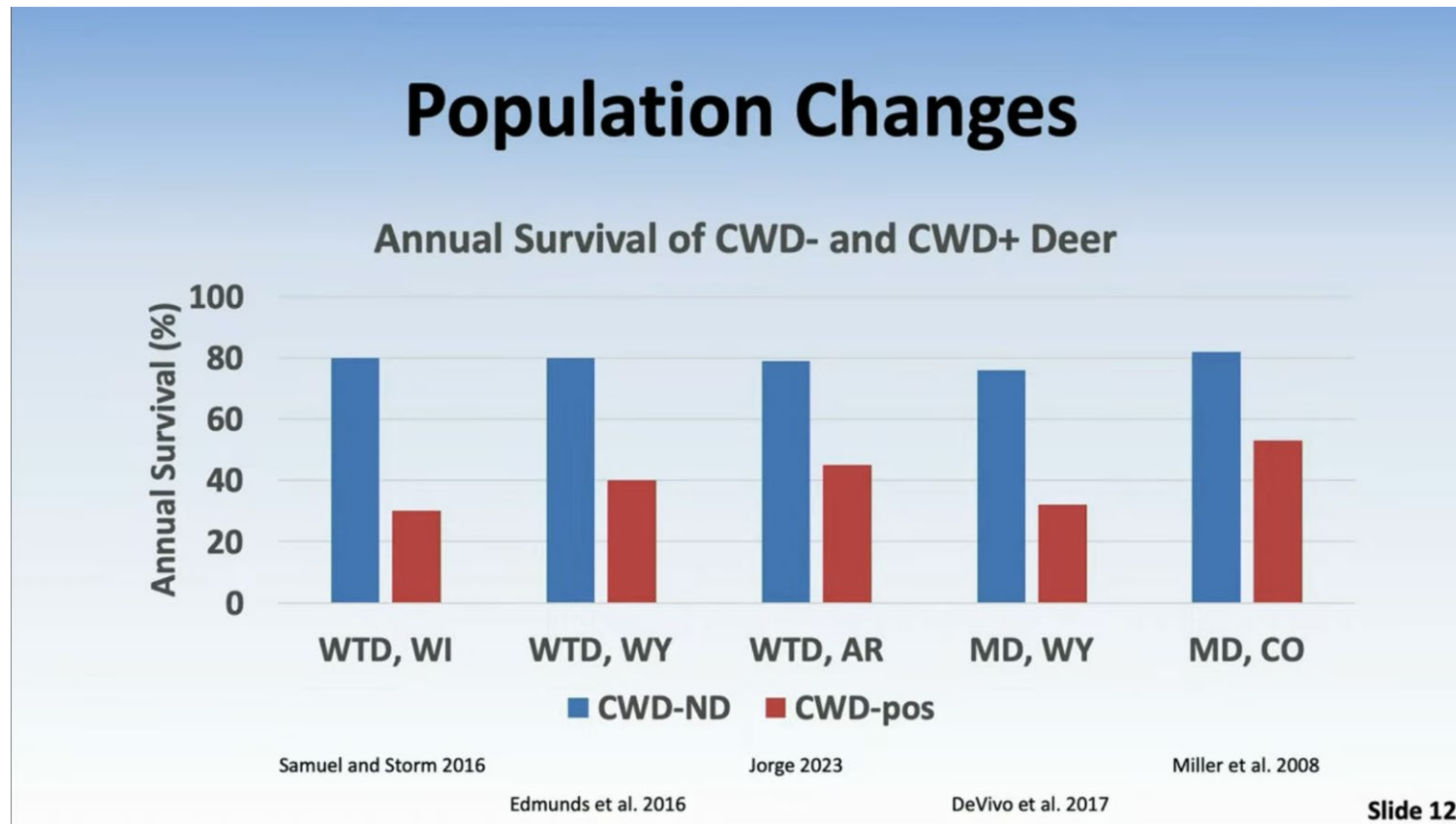


**or this...**



## Population impacts

Negative impacts to populations at high prevalence.... **ALWAYS!**



## Wyoming Outfitter gives up on Deer outfitting due to CWD



Riverton-area outfitter Ken Metzler in September 2022. (Mike Koshmrl/WyoFile)

"Based on hunter observation, landowner observation and [Game and Fish] personnel observation," Gregory said, "we're not seeing the deer that we used to."

Ken Metzler had a front-row seat to the crash. When [WyoFile first discussed CWD's impacts with the Riverton-area outfitter in late 2021](#), he estimated that his deer hunting operation had fallen off by 80%. Virtually every animal his paid hunters killed on leased agricultural hunting grounds — 98%, he estimated — tested positive for the disease.

Nearly three years later, Metzler reported that he's given up on his commercial deer hunting operation altogether.

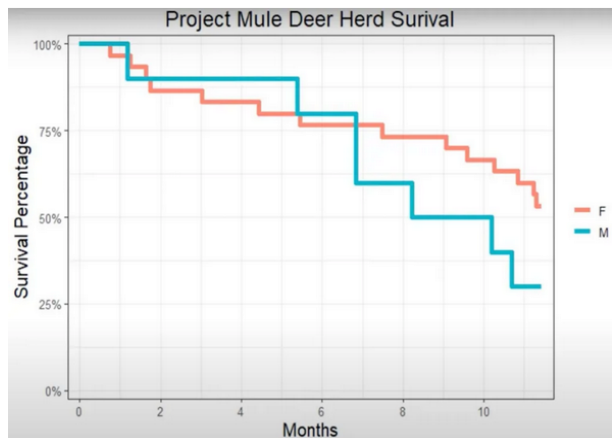
"We're pretty well shut down," he said. "I'm not booking any deer hunters. I can't promise something that isn't there."

The 67-year-old outfitter has witnessed the Project Herd cycle in the past, and he retains some hope that it'll bounce back.

"It's getting worse right now, but it'll turn around a little bit," Metzler said. "If it comes back, it comes back — but it's not looking too good right now, that's for sure."

# Wyoming Outfitter gives up on Deer outfitting because of CWD cont...

Ahead of the data dump illuminating how CWD-infected deer are using the landscape differently, an eye-opening discovery has emerged. The collared deer are dying at horrendous rates that threaten to wipe out the herd. Typically, adult doe mule deer have about an 85% chance of surviving any given year. In the Project Herd, however, only half of the first cohort of 30 GPS-collared does lived through their first 12 months as a research deer. The bucks, more prone to CWD, fared worse. Three out of the 10 tracked males were still breathing after one year, but by the time WyoFile rendezvoused with Russell some 15 months into the study, 90% were dead. A single buck remained.



(Wyoming Game and Fish Department)

Unlike in [other portions of Wyoming](#), winter wasn't to blame. Humans weren't the direct cause, either. "We didn't have a single hunter harvest," Russell said.

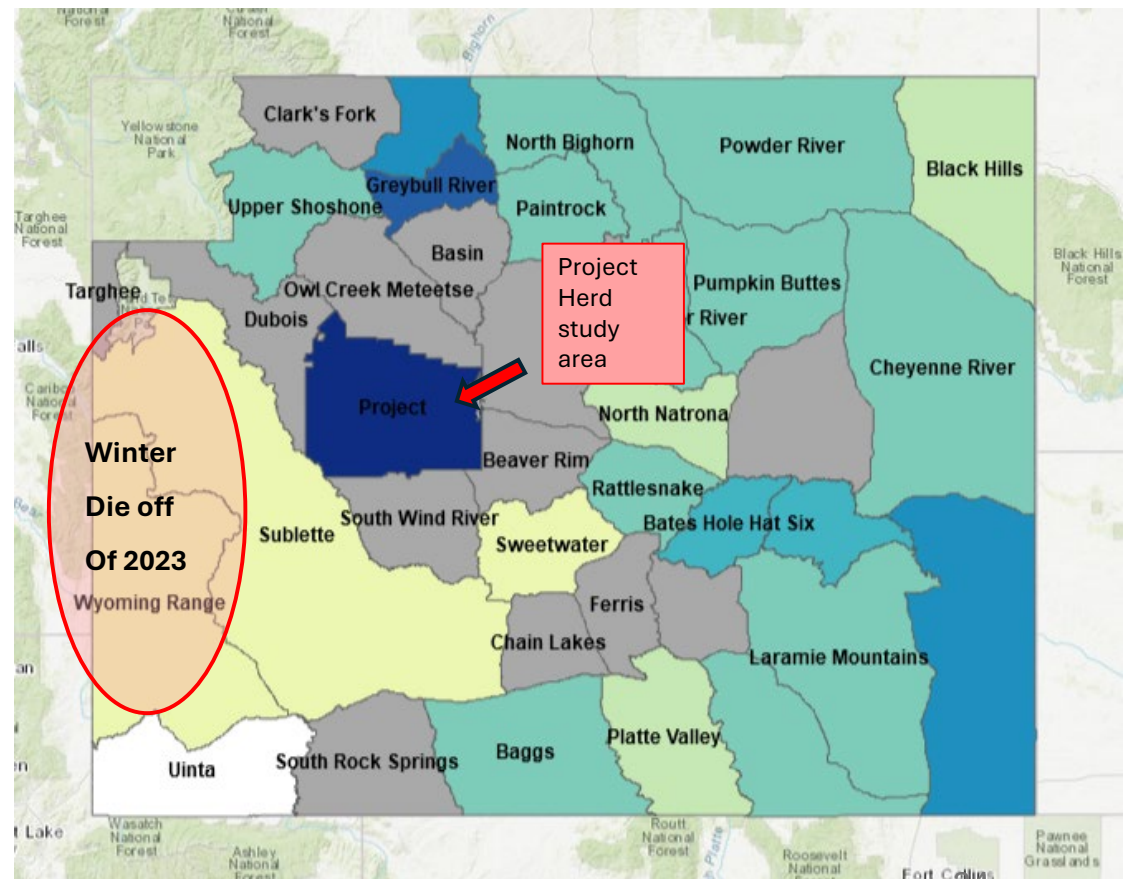
"In February of 2023, we deployed 40 GPS collars on adult male and females. In 2024, we deployed 42 GPS collars. This year, we deployed an additional 52 GPS collars. Despite the bad winter in 2023, we didn't see a significant difference in annual survival (365 days) between deer captured in 2023 and 2024; although, 2023 was slightly lower." - T. Russell

## At 15 months

9 out of 10 bucks dead

(Not a single hunter harvest of all collared deer)

2023 winter not the cause. Winter kill in a different region, 100 miles away on the other side of a mountain range

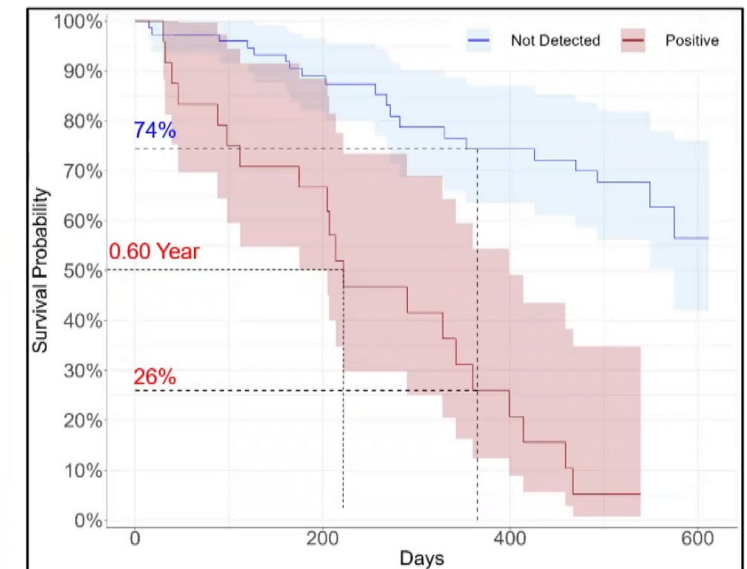


# Arkansas Research – GPS Collared Deer

**"34% of positive animals dying of no other cause other than late stage CWD."**

*-Dr. Jenn Ballard, Arkansas Veterinarian*

## Survival



## CWD-Cause-Specific



CWD	Coyote	Bobcat	Bear	Harvest	CWD	Disease	Abnormal	Other
Positive	13%	7%	0%	24%	34%	4%	10%	7%
Not Detected	28%	10%	3%	28%	0%	10%	0%	21%

**= 100%**

**= 100%**

**At 1 year, positive animals are half as likely to be alive, with a 26% chance of survival.**

**By 500 days, ~5% chance of survival for positive animals vs negative animals at ~70%**



Arkansas end stage 2 yr old  
elk




Arkansas end stage doe



Arkansas end stage doe

# Wisconsin's Preliminary results from 4-year study GPS collaring 1,089 deer

Led by Dr. Dan Storm – Fargo, ND native



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NATURAL RESOURCES

infected and uninfected deer. Annual survival estimates are listed in the table below.

Annual Survival Probability

	Uninfected	CWD-Infected
Females	83%	41%
Males	69%	17%

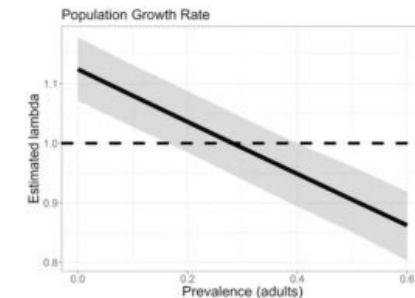
These figures indicate that CWD is substantially reducing the annual survival probability of both male and female white-tailed deer. Reduced female survival lowers the growth rate of the population,

"...a preliminary summary showed end-stage wasting was the **leading cause of death (57%) of CWD-positive adult female deer.**"

Based on inputs from deer in the study, the model predicts that once CWD prevalence is 30% or higher in adult female deer – the key to deer recruitment – the disease is likely to lead to a population-level decline.

## AGENDA ITEM 6.A, Daniel Storm/Deer Research Scientist

### Results - CWD and Deer Population Change



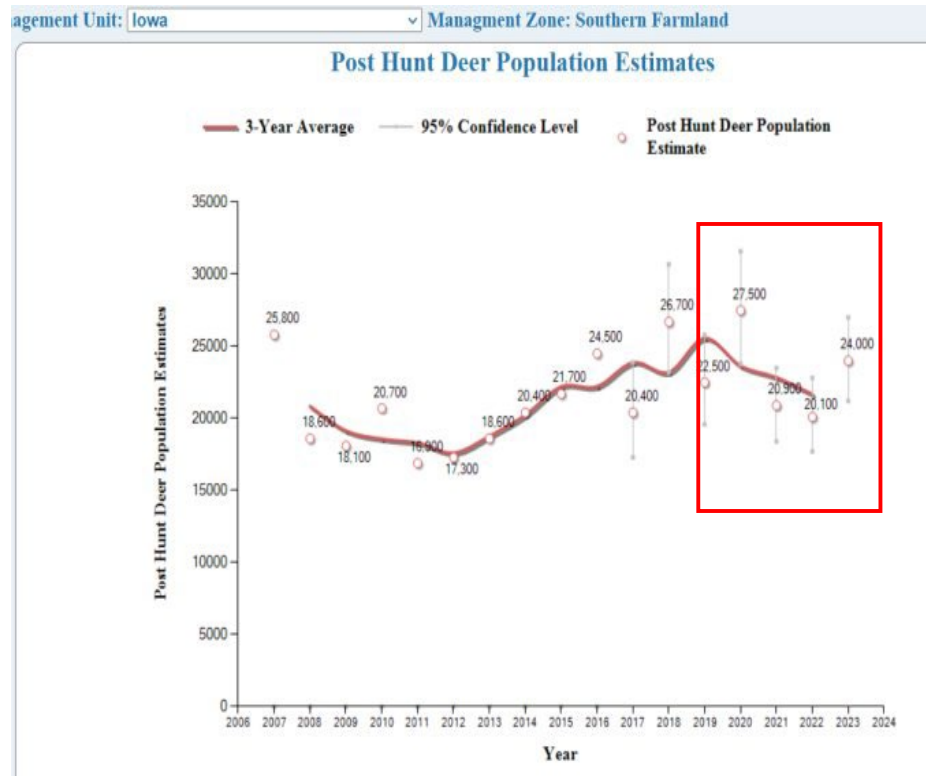
Slide #13

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | DNR.WI.GOV

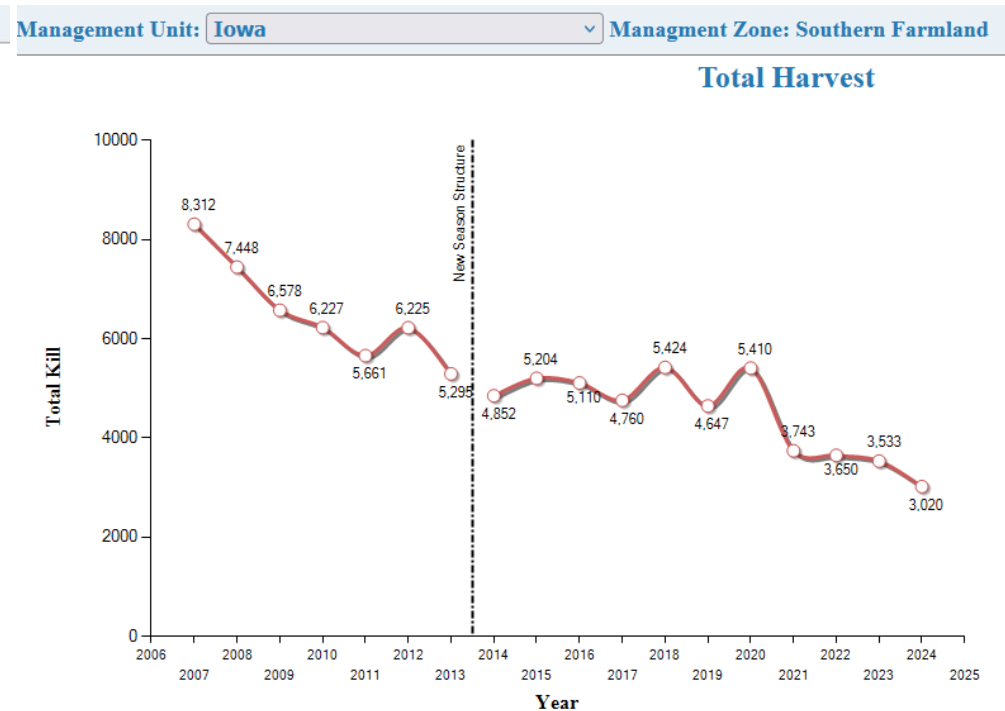
A graph shows the relationship between CWD prevalence and annual deer population change. The relationship was derived from data from the Southwest Wisconsin CWD, Deer and Predator Study. Wisconsin Department Of Natural Resources

# Iowa County Wisconsin – Original outbreak zone (2000)

## Sustained high prevalence



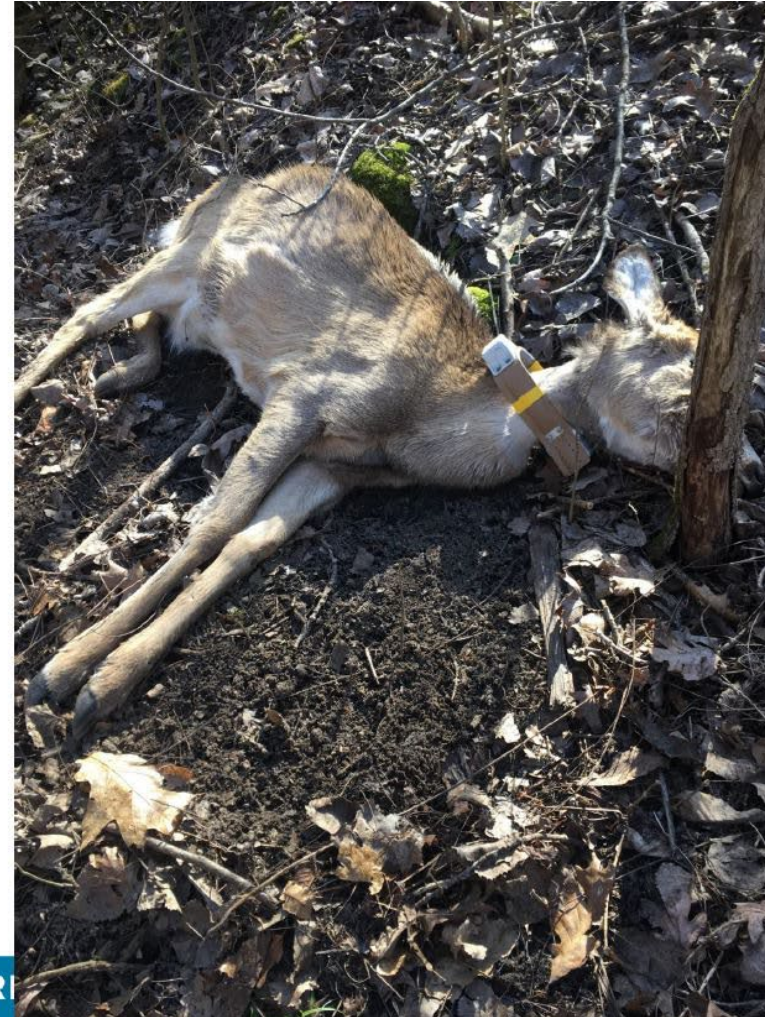
Negative population impacts with sustained high prevalence (~30%) shown in Wisconsin's original outbreak area and most infected county.



- No bears or Wolves in Iowa County. No EHD outbreaks. No culling/sharps shooting since 2007.
- 2024 hunter harvest has **decreased by 19%** from 2022 and is **HALF** of what it was in 2011/2012 season.
- Yet, the population is still falling.
- Hunters and landowners seeing noticeable lowering of age structure and lower deer numbers in some areas of neighboring counties.

### Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Doe
- Captured on 1/09/2017, 6 ½ years at capture
- CWD- at capture
- 165 lbs at capture, body condition score 5/10
- Recaptured on 2/04/2019
- CWD+ at recapture
- 164 lbs at capture, body condition score 7/10
- Died on 3/25/2019
- 90 lbs at death
- Lost 74lb, 45% body weight in 49 days
- 1.5 lbs per day
- CWD+ at death
- Lab necropsy
  - Severe emaciation, pneumonia



## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Doe
- Captured on 2/27/2017
- CWD+ at capture
- Est. 170 lbs at capture, body condition score 7/10
- Died on 5/29/2017
- Fell down hill
- 4 years of age at death
- 106 lbs at death
- Lab necropsy
  - Severe emaciation, pneumonia
  - Mummified fetus



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## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Doe
- Collared 12/28/2017 ~3 ½ years of age
- CWD negative at capture
- 118 lbs at capture, body condition score of 0/10
- Died 02/14/2018
- CWD-positive at death
- Lab necropsy:
  - Severe emaciation
  - “The rumen contains a large amount of feed material...”
  - “Severe emaciation with adequate feed intake.”
- 78 lbs at death
- Loss of 40 lbs, ~33% body weight



- Doe
- Captured on 3/13/2017
- CWD+ at capture
- Died on 8/12/2017
- Carcass consumed

#### Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project



# Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

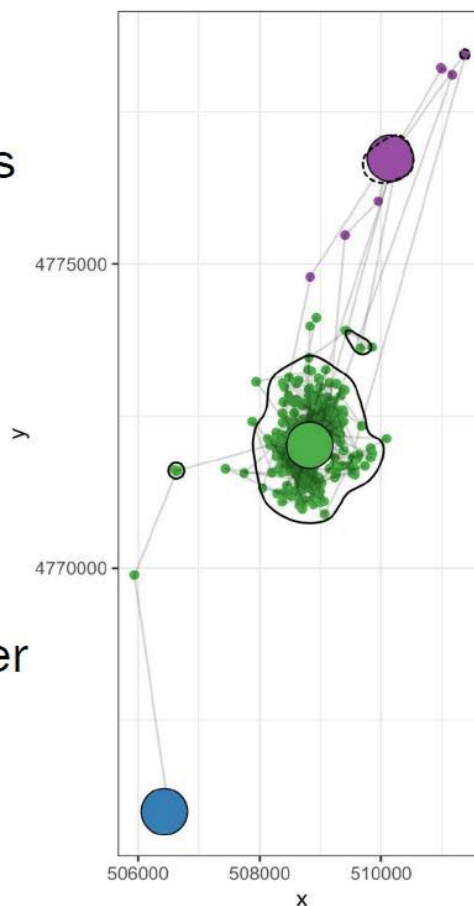
- Doe
- Collared 12/19/2019 as ~20 months old
- 129 lbs at capture, body condition score of 10/10
- CWD-negative at capture
- Died 7/06/2022
- 50 yards from house; Landowner saw “extremely skinny and sick looking” days prior to death
- 76 lbs at death
- 53 lb, 41% loss
- CWD-positive at death
- Lab necropsy:
  - Severe emaciation
  - Mild pneumonia



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

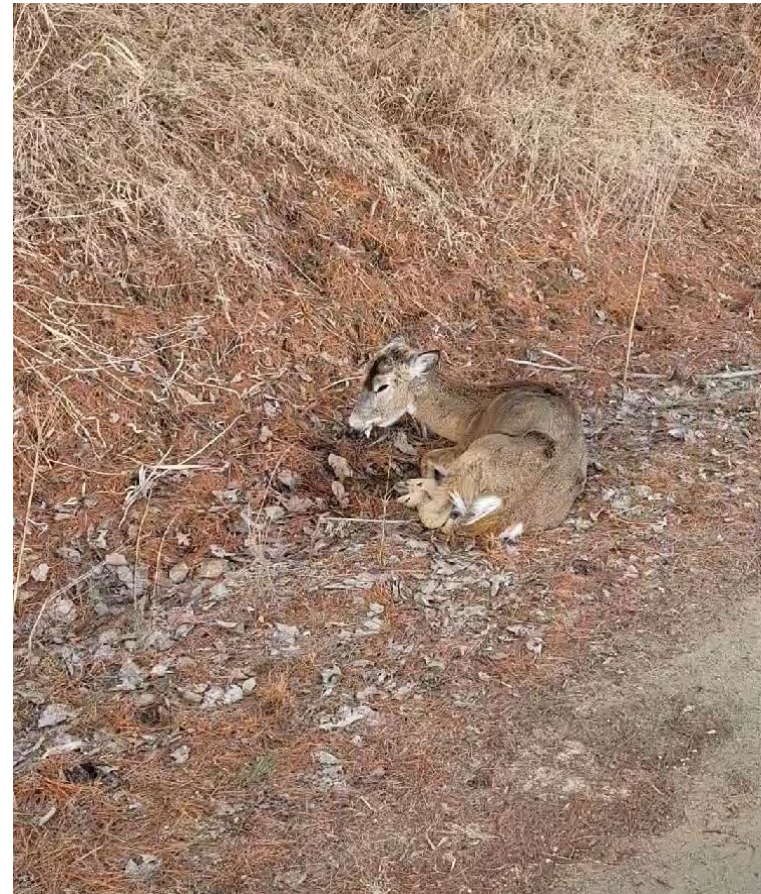
## Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project

- Born spring 2018
- Collared January 2020 as ~20 months old (20mo age class)
- CWD-positive at capture
- Died 9/29/2020
- Emaciated
- CWD-positive at death
- No necropsy as landowner did not want carcass removed





Wisconsin GPS Collar Research Project –  
CWD positive doe



Hunter reported end stage white tailed deer

# Top 5 States - Hunters Per Capita

- |   |   |                           |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Wyoming. 23.4% of its population is a licensed hunter. Or 136,205 total.   | ➡ | No hunting over bait      |
| 2. South Dakota. 22.7% of its population is a licensed hunter. 206,316 total. | ➡ | No hunting over bait      |
| 3. Montana. 20.6% are licensed hunters. 231,339 total.                        | ➡ | No hunting over bait      |
| 4. North Dakota. 19.3% are licensed hunters. 150,724 total.                   | ➡ | Baiting bans in CWD Zones |
| 5. Idaho. 15.6% are licensed hunters. 301,994 total.                          | ➡ | No hunting over bait      |

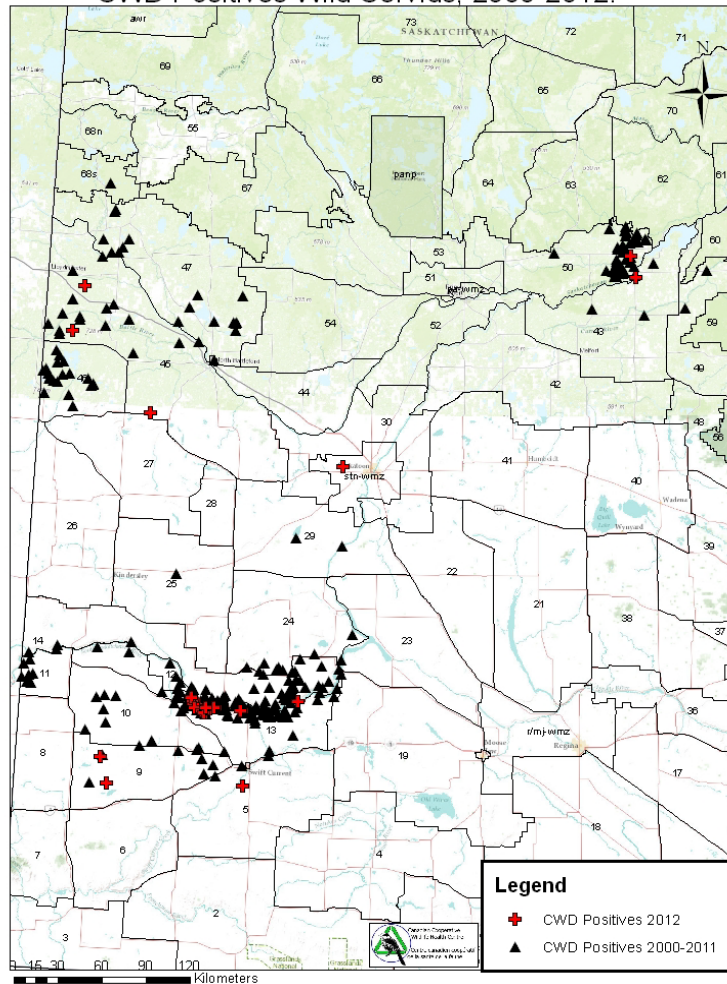
17 states have implemented partial bans due to CWD.



# Saskatchewan vs North Dakota

Same number of years with disease

CWD Positives Wild Cervids, 2000-2012.



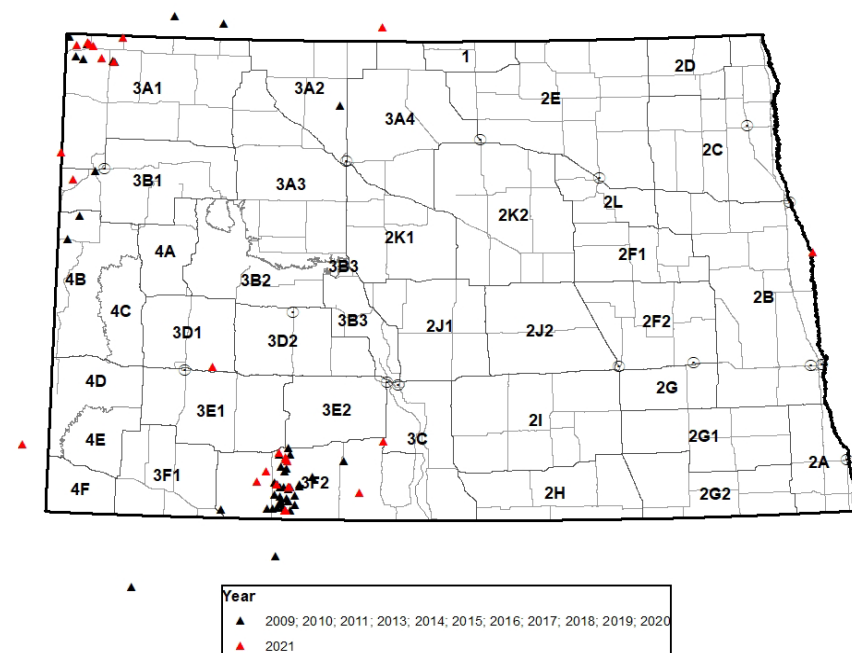
**Saskatchewan – 2000-2012**

Didn't do anything

**TOTAL CWD positives = 397**

**Significantly more Geographic Spread with larger and denser hot spots**

CWD Detections in North Dakota; 2009-2021



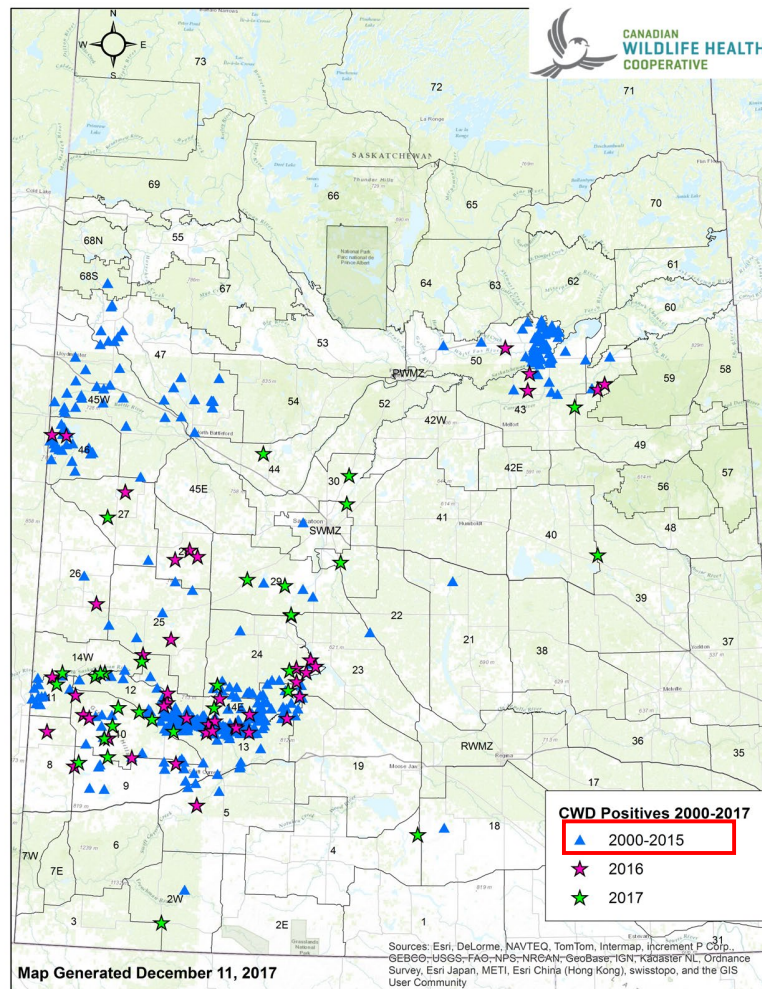
**North Dakota – 2009-2021**

**Implemented baiting bans immediately and 6 million dollars spent on hay yard and silage fencing.**

**TOTAL CWD positives = 70**

# Saskatchewan vs North Dakota

**Same number of years with disease**



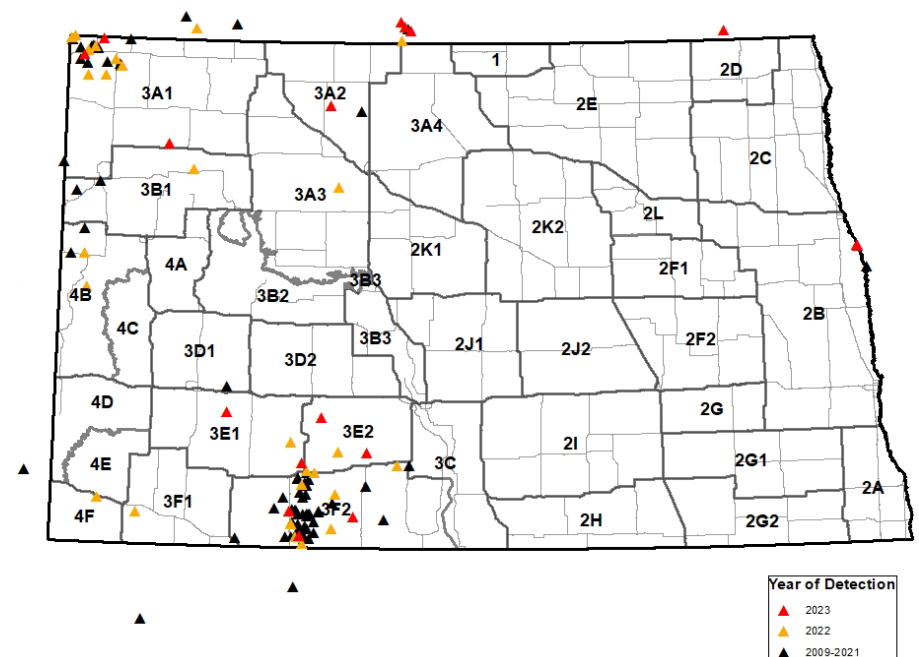
**Saskatchewan – 2000-2015**

**Didn't do anything**

**TOTAL CWD positives = 458 even with multi-year gap in Surveillance funding (2010-2016)**

**145 miles of linear distance in Southern Saskatchewan outbreak**

**CWD Detections in North Dakota; 2009-2023**



**North Dakota – 2009-2023**

**Implemented baiting bans immediately and 6 million dollars spent on hay yard and silage fencing.**

**TOTAL CWD positives = 105**

**37 miles of linear distance in southern ND outbreak**

All 21 years of SD surveillance results

## 2021-22 CWD Surveillance Program Positive Test Results



**22 yr TOTAL CWD positives = 2,599 even with 6-year gap in surveillance**

**Geographic Spread over ~ 70 million acres (higher density across range)**

2001 - February 16, 2022



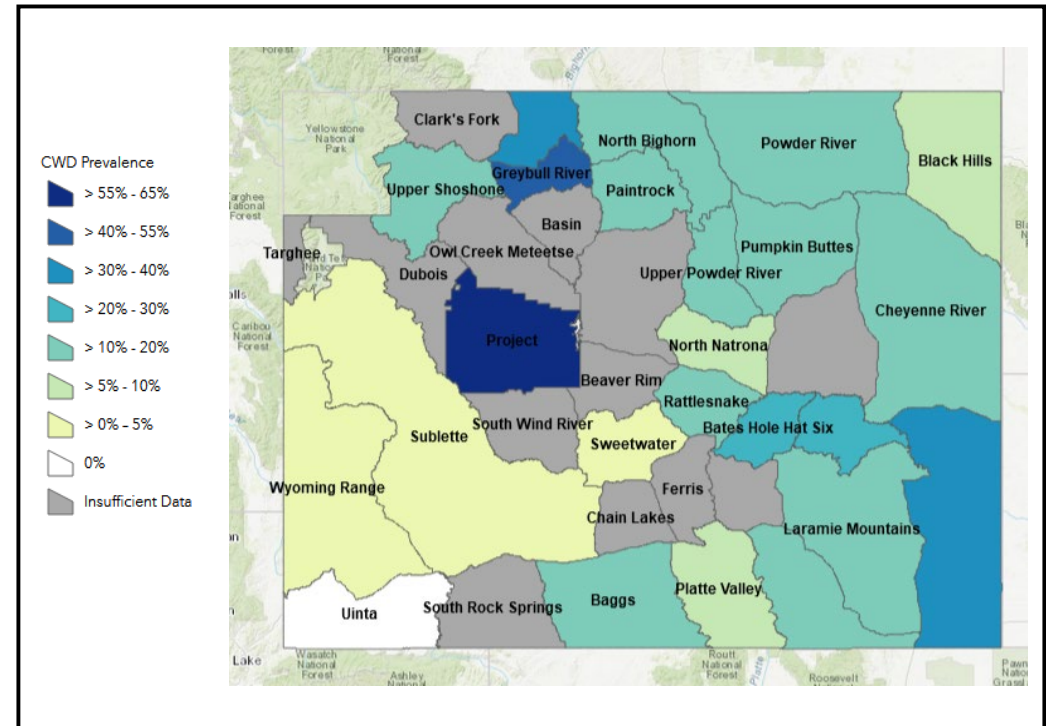
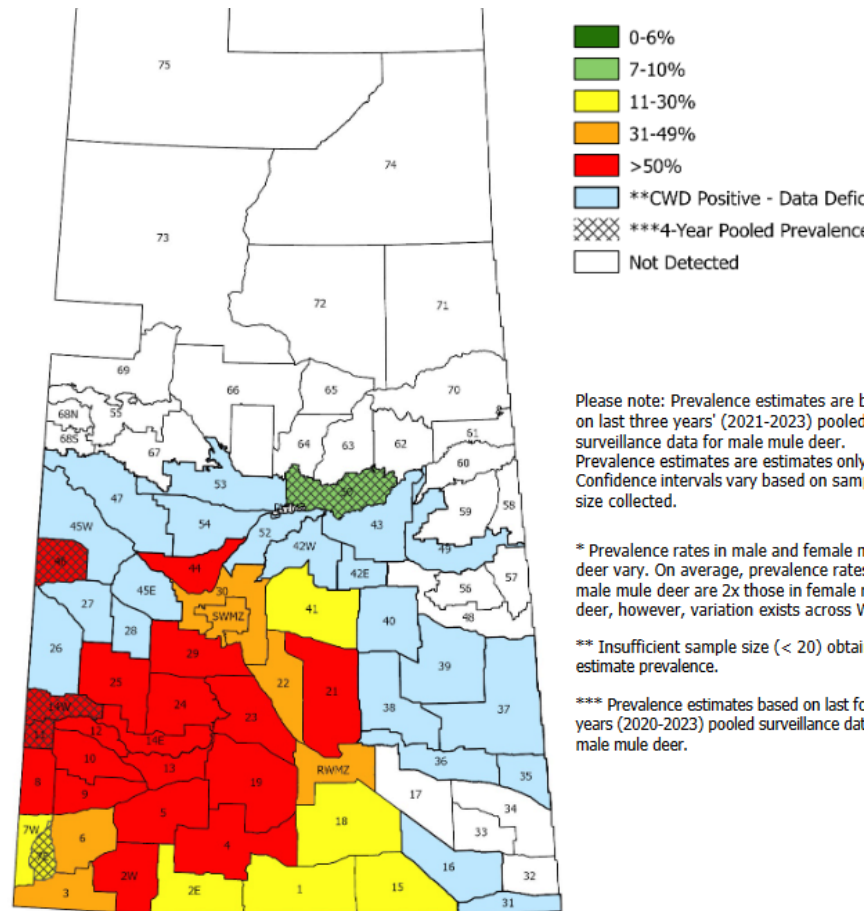
**21 yr TOTAL CWD positives = 438 in wild deer**

**282 captive elk in Wind Cave NP**

**54 Positives just in 2021/22 report**

**Confined to west half of the state ~ 23 million acres**

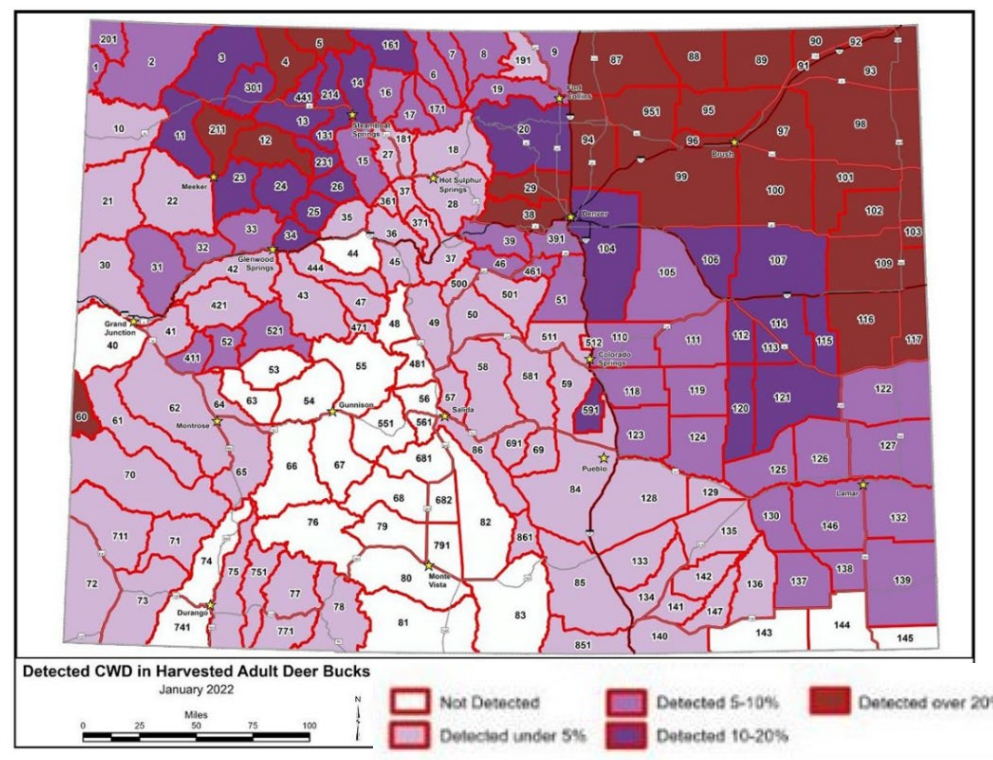
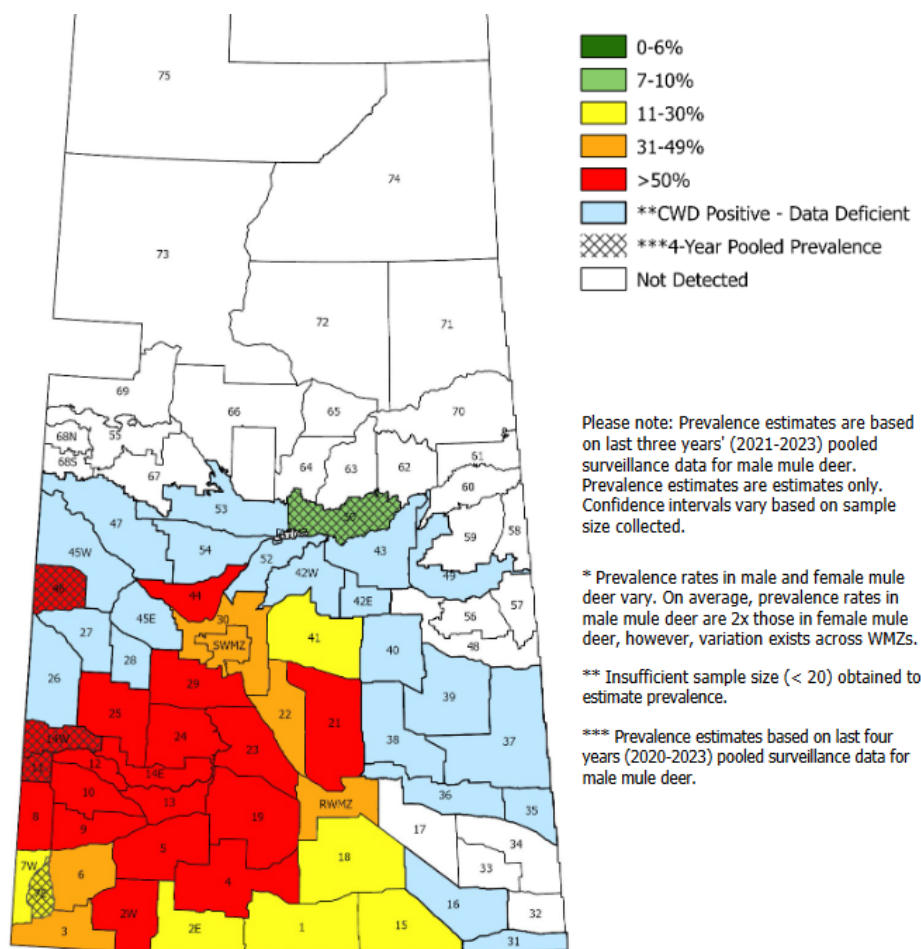
# Saskatchewan vs Wyoming



- Recent Prevalence Estimates after **24 years**
- ~74.4 Million acres of geographic spread
- **18 units with over 75% prevalence**
- **Baiting is widely popular in SK**

- Recent Prevalence Estimates after **39 years** with disease
- ~55.5 million acres of geographic spread
- **2 units over 55% prevalence**
- **Wyoming implemented NO CWD management efforts but baiting and feeding has never been allowed.**

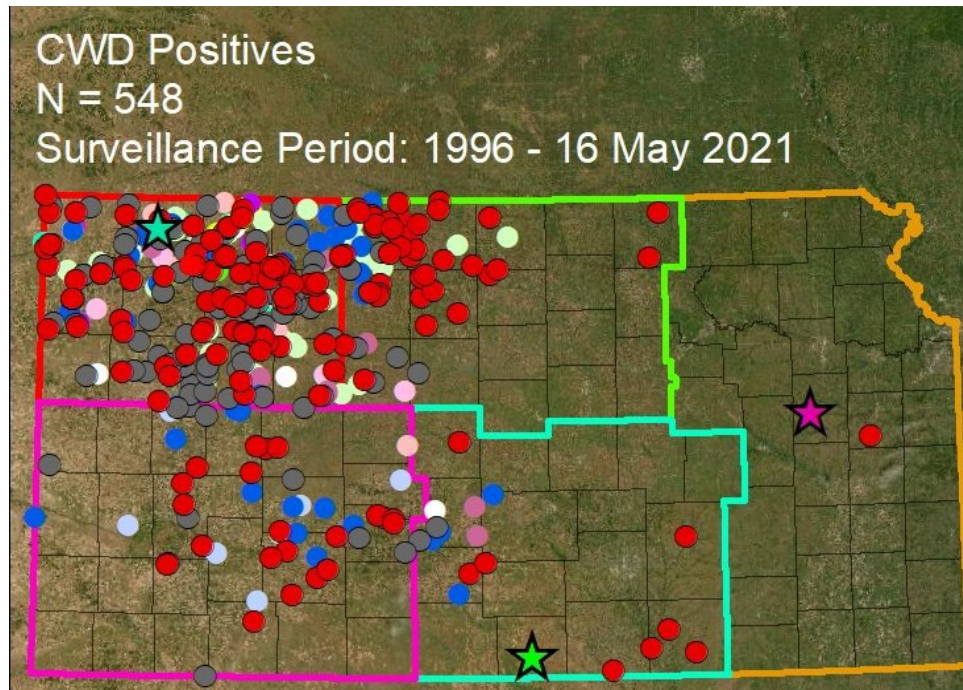
# Saskatchewan vs Colorado Prevalence



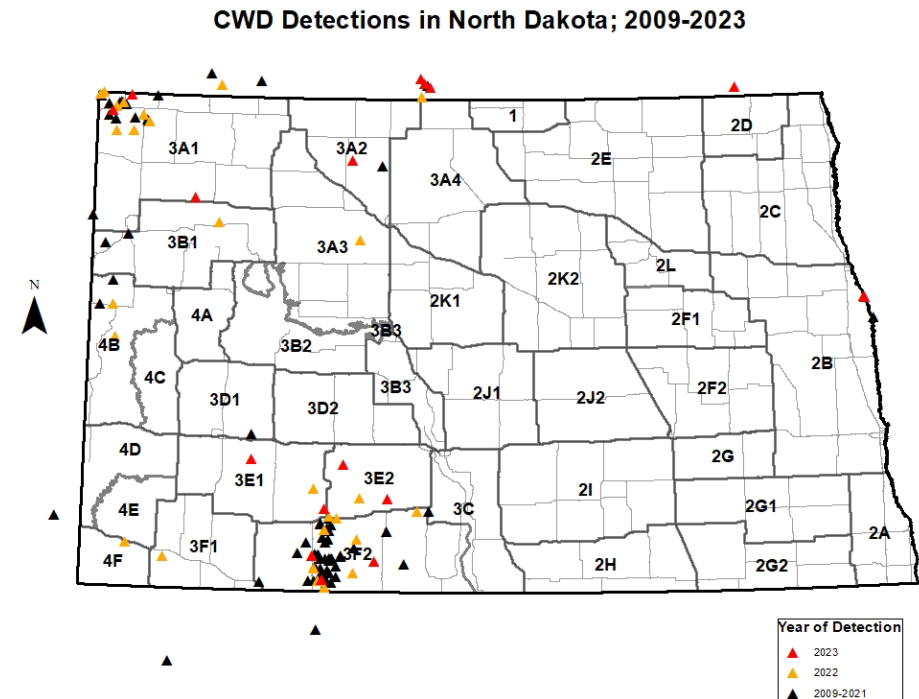
- Recent Prevalence Estimates after **24 years**
  - First detection in the wild – **2000**
  - Baiting has always been allowed
- ~74.4 Million acres of geographic spread
- **18 Units** over 75% prevalence

- Recent Prevalence Estimates after **43 years** with disease
  - First detection in the wild – **1981**
  - Baiting was never allowed
- ~56.5 million acres of geographic spread
- **NO UNITS** over 30% prevalence

## Kansas (2005-2021) vs North Dakota (2009-2023)



- First detection in the wild- 2005
- Continues to allow baiting
- **16 years** with disease – **548 positives**



- First detection in the wild – 2009
- Baiting Bans in CWD units
- **14 years** with the disease – **105 Positives**

# Kansas vs South Dakota

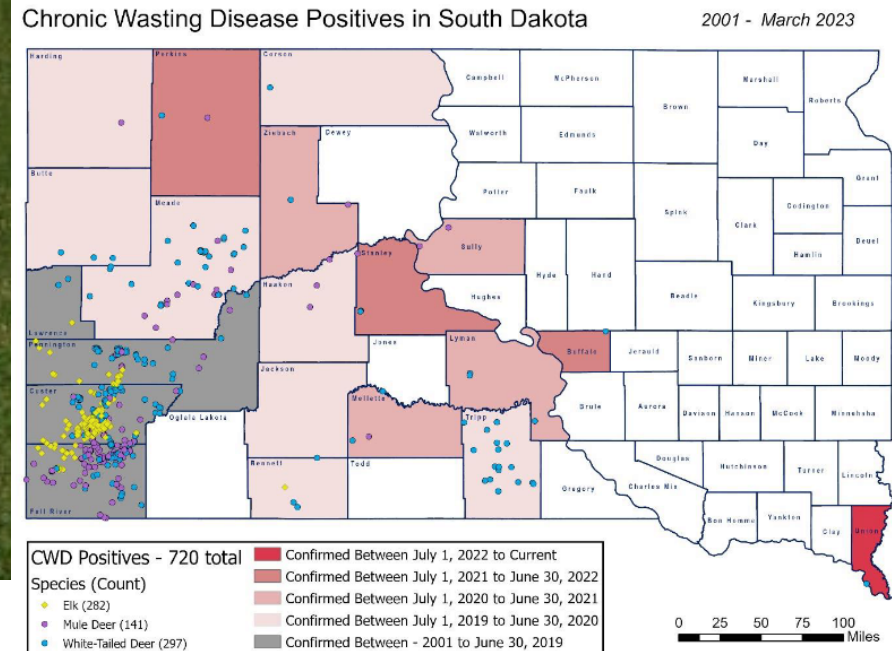
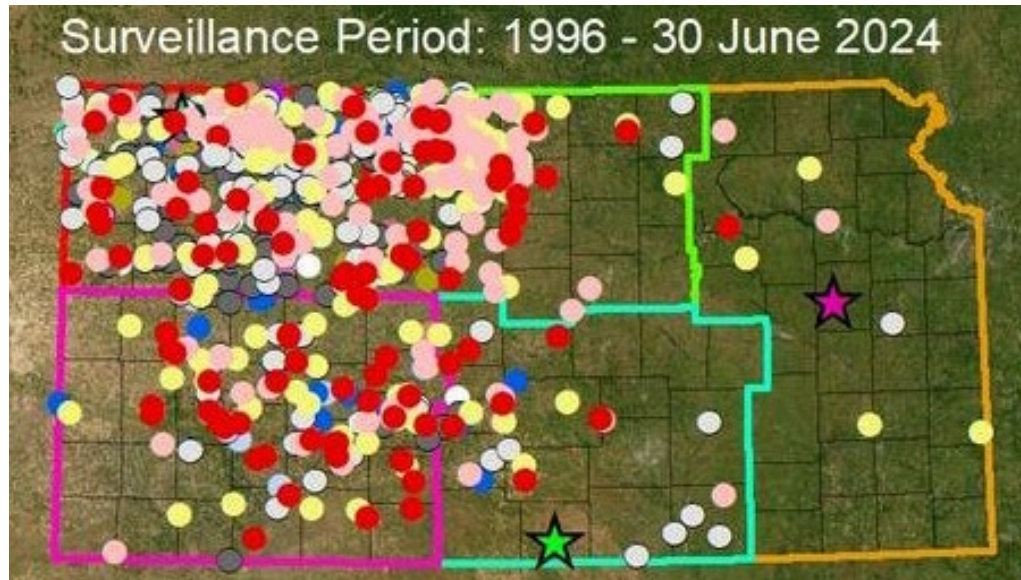
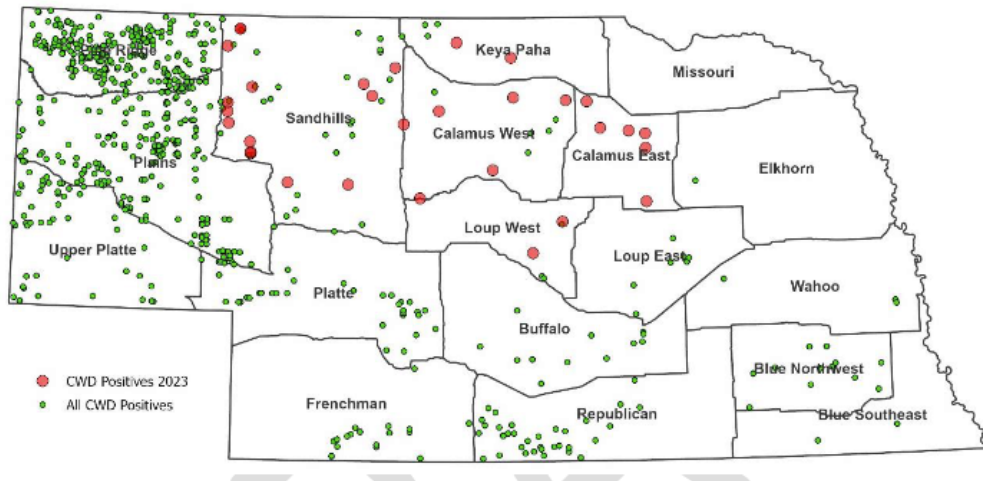


Figure 1. Locations of CWD infected free-ranging cervids in South Dakota, 2001-2023.

- First detection in the wild- 2005 (20 years with disease)
- Baiting is legal and widely popular
- **50% prevalence** in NW part of the state
- Finding sick deer is relatively common
- Kansas after 2024, now over **1,200 cases**

- First detection in the wild – 2001 (23 years with disease)
- Baiting is not legal
- **438 wild deer** and elk positives
- Single digit prevalence outside of Wind Cave NP
  - 282 captive elk positive in Wind Cave NP

# Nebraska vs South Dakota



Chronic Wasting Disease Positives in South Dakota

2001 - March 2023

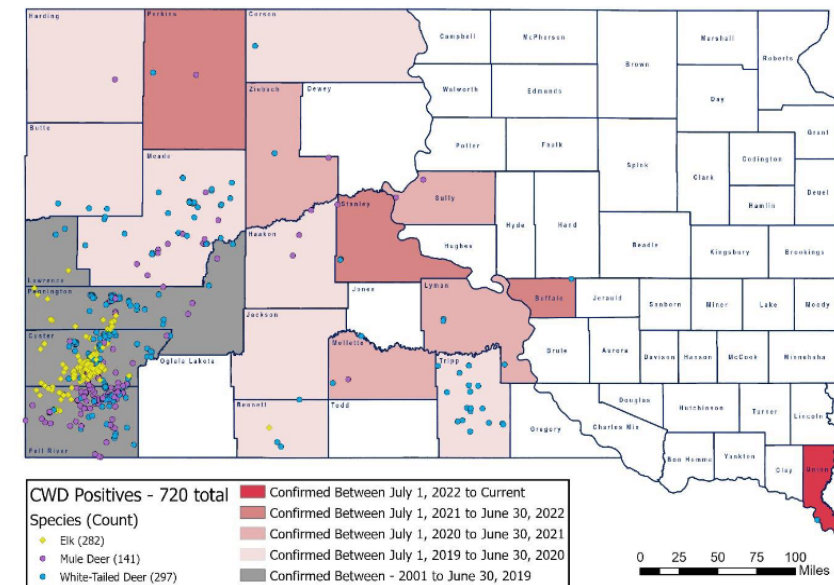


Figure 1. Locations of CWD infected free-ranging cervids in South Dakota, 2001-2023.

- CWD first discovered in 2000
- Baiting allowed on Private Lands
- 24 years with disease
  - 1,269 positive wild deer
  - 19 positive elk
- First detection in the wild – 2001
- No baiting
- 23 years with the disease – 438 wild deer and elk positives
  - 282 captive elk positive in Wind Cave NP

# Texas vs New Mexico

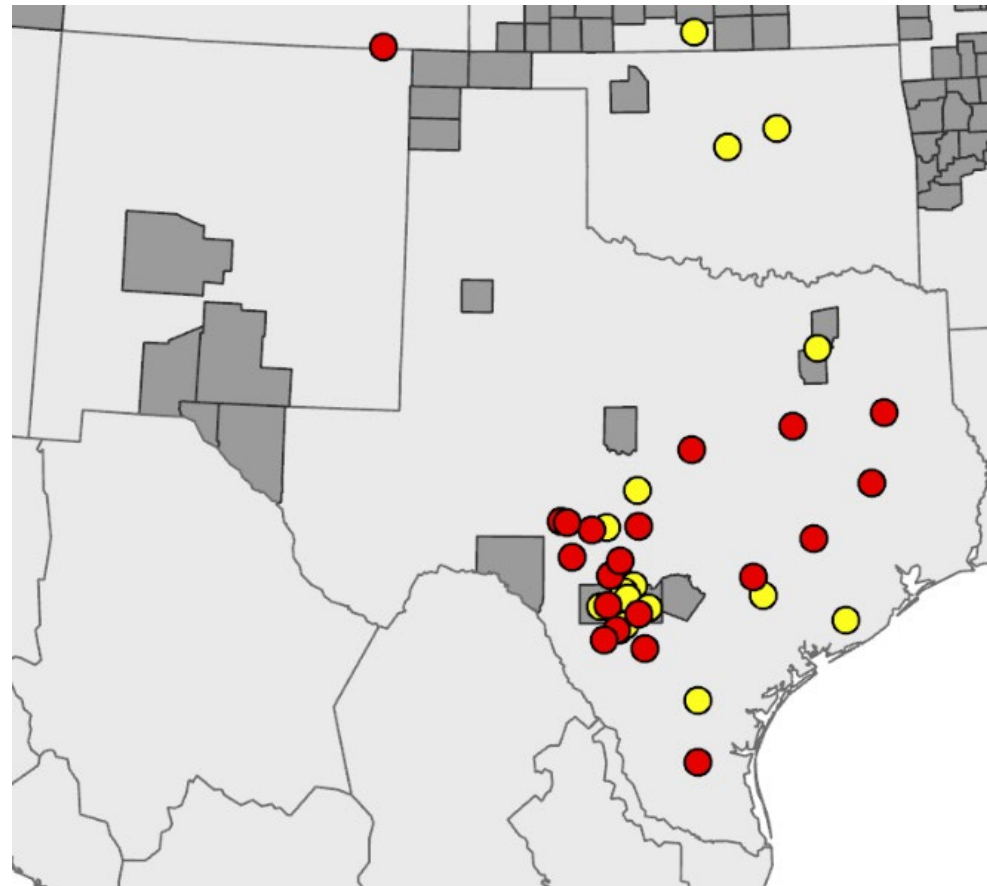
New Mexico – 2002 - 2023

First detected in 2002

No baiting

TOTAL CWD+ = 59

Confined to 3 counties



Texas – 2012-2024

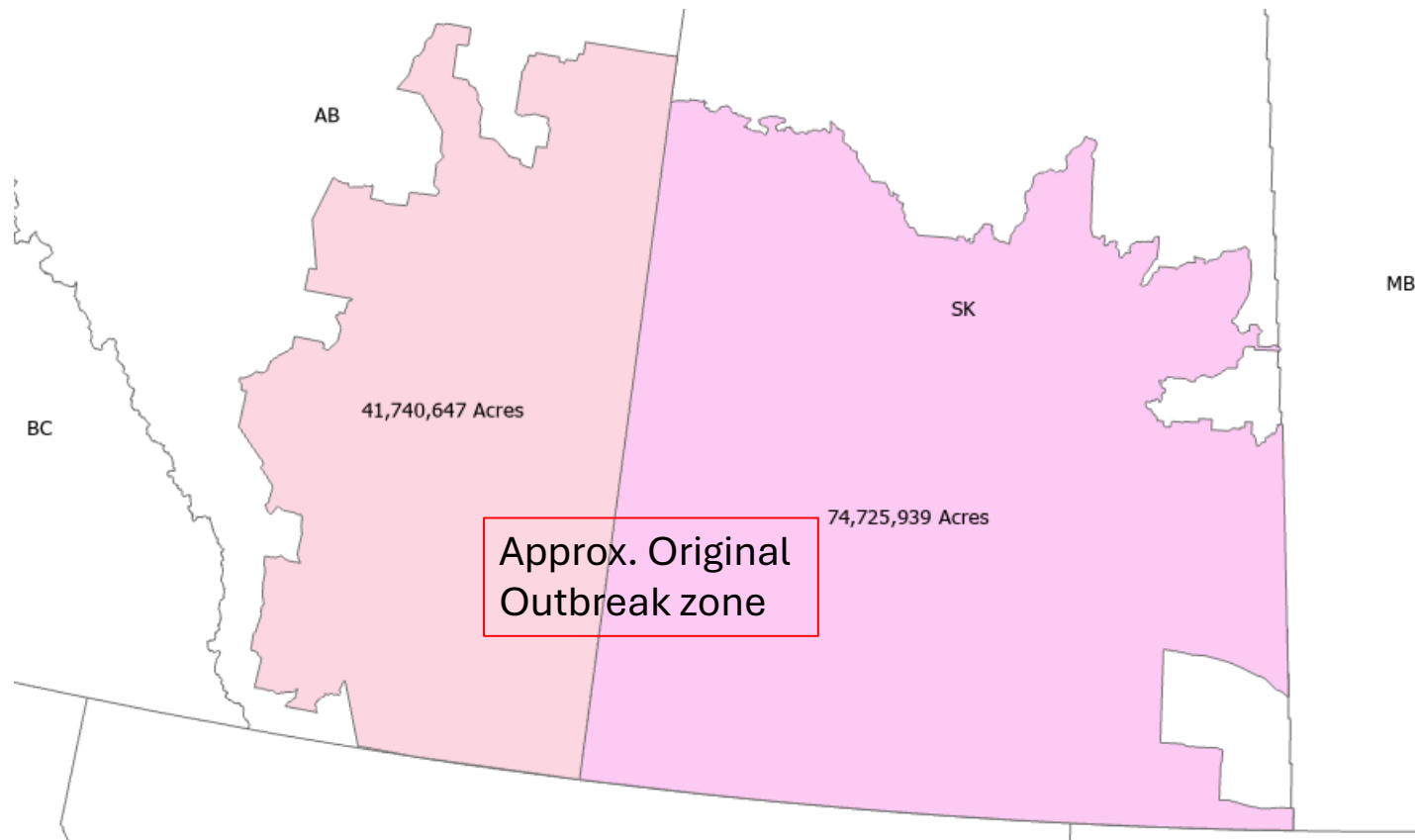
First detected in 2012

TOTAL CWD positives =  
1,019 as of November 2024

Texas has blurred the lines  
with captive and wild deer.  
Captive deer can still be  
considered wild, and  
thousands of captive deer are  
"released" into the wild every  
year in Texas.

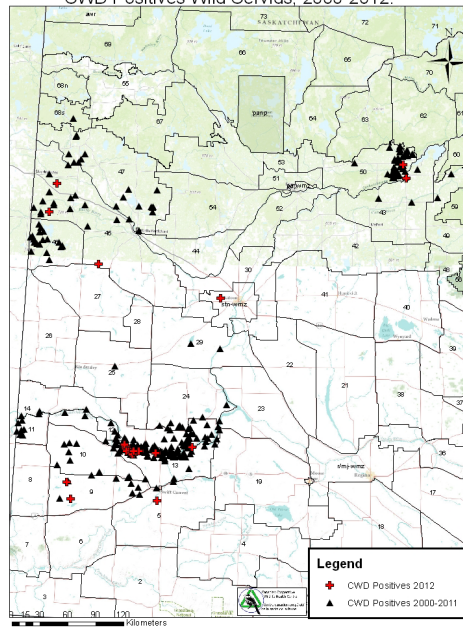
Significantly more  
Geographic Spread.

# Alberta vs Saskatchewan

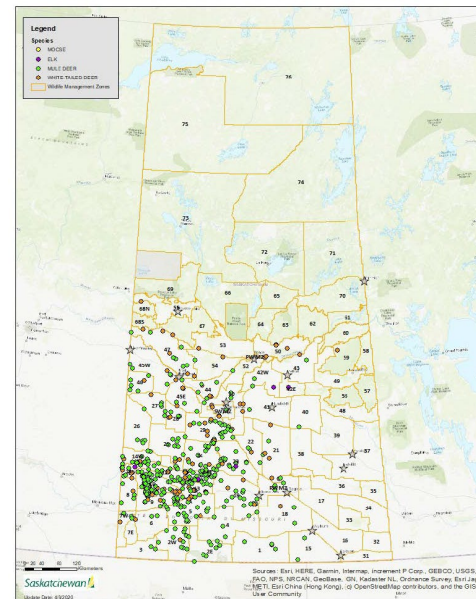


- ~33-million-acre difference in Geographic Spread.
- That's equal to 75% of the total surface area of North Dakota.
- Alberta's most infected areas are along the Saskatchewan border
- Landowner/outfitter anecdotal reports 60-70% population reduction

CWD Positives Wild Cervids, 2000-2012.

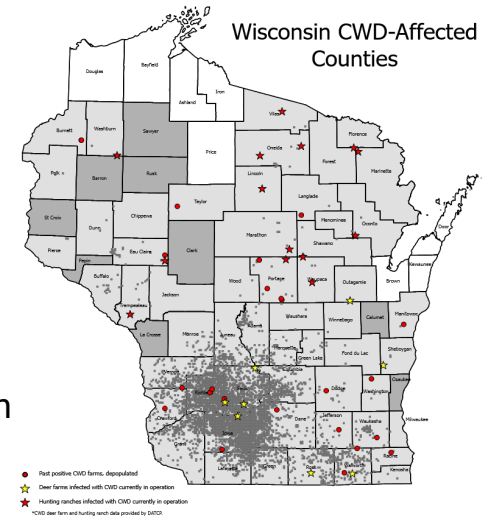


Chronic Wasting Disease 2019 Positive Test Results

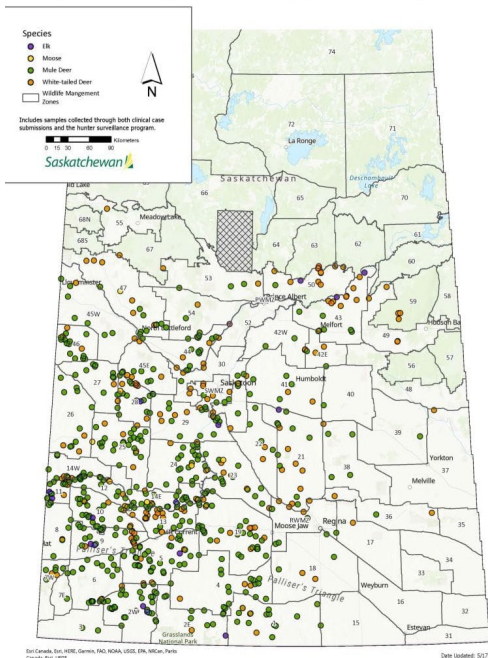


Sask and WI both found disease in 2000

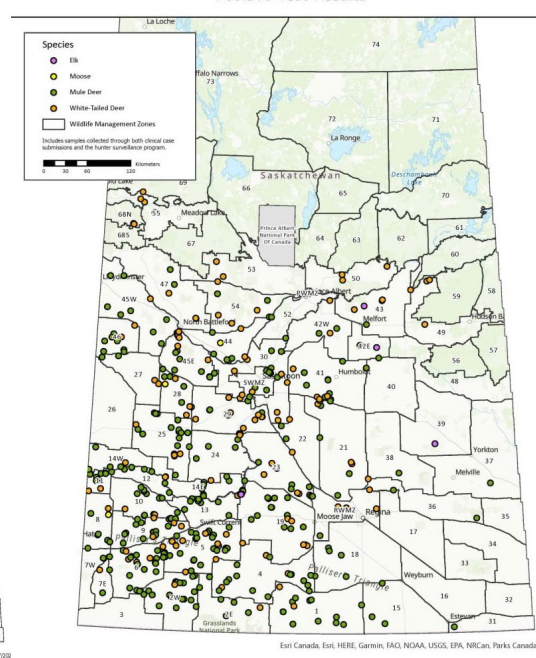
Cumulative CWD positives for Wisconsin 2000-2024



2021-22 CWD Surveillance Program Positive Test Results



2022-23 CWD Surveillance Program Positive Test Results



To scale comparison:  
Wisconsin & Saskatchewan



The Game and Fish Department should be managing our state's wildlife, not voters and the ballot box or legislators. This is an extremely dangerous approach to wildlife management. Please vote no on SB 2137, and allow the ND Game and Fish Department to manage wildlife and wildlife diseases. I am opposed to the use of bait and the congregation of deer the bait creates.

Thank you,  
Blake

Dear Members of the Senate Agriculture and Veteran Affairs Committee:

I respectfully urge a **Do Not Pass on SB 2137**. I am a hunter and love the outdoors. I also believe you should let state agencies do the job they are entrusted to do through state statute. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF) is responsible for managing our state's wildlife resources for the benefit of all North Dakotans, both now and in the future. Their staff, including the State Wildlife Veterinarian, bring extensive knowledge and dedication to this mission. This bill would disregard the best available science and technical expertise of an entire agency, stripping it of its authority to issue rules and policies aimed at reducing the spread of fatal wildlife diseases.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is the most transmissible prion disease, according to the National Institutes of Health. It is present before outward symptoms appear, meaning that by the time visible signs emerge, the disease has likely spread to a significant portion of the deer and elk population—animals that will ultimately die from it. Left unmanaged, CWD leads to population declines, which in turn reduce hunting opportunities with a corresponding reduction in available licenses and limit access to this valuable wildlife resource. Studies dating back to 2005 in Wyoming, Colorado, and South Dakota have demonstrated significant population declines if the spread of CWD is left unchecked. This bill puts a limited current gratification over the long-term sustainability of the resource. It is true that the NDGF cannot control all forms of spread, as they do not have the authority in state law to do so. However, they should be able to use any tool in their authority to limit disease transmission as much as possible.

Restricting the NDGF's ability to manage CWD could also have repercussions for efforts to control other wildlife diseases, such as bovine tuberculosis, which poses serious risks to livestock. Ranchers already face economic challenges, and additional disease-related losses could further threaten their livelihoods and rural economies. Targeted, science-based wildlife disease management is essential to mitigating these risks and should remain under the authority of those with the expertise and resources to handle it—the NDGF.

I urge you to trust the state agencies that work for the people of North Dakota. Please vote **Do Not Pass on SB 2137**

Sincerely,

Heather Husband

I support SB 2137. I believe it is very low risk for CWD transmission.

I also believe it will have a low impact on the big game populations.

I would ask you to support this bill, Thank you

Emery Duben

Testimony of John Risch resident of Bismarck  
Before the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee  
In Opposition to SB 2137 1-17-2025

Mr. Chairman members of the committee my name is John Risch I'm a lifetime citizen of North Dakota. I'm retired from the railroad industry. My wife and I own a farm and ranch 10 miles southwest of Mandan. An incredibly beautiful place that has the Heart River flowing through it. A place where I and others hunt deer every year.

I strongly believe in the principle of "fair chase". I not only don't allow baiting on our place I also don't allow cameras, because they undermine the principle of "fair chase".

Baiting deer is certainly not "fair chase". Deer become accustomed to the bait and show up every day to eat it. All the hunter has to do is set up and wait. Shooting a deer over bait is not hunting, it's simply killing.

We are very fortunate to live in North Dakota where our hunting heritage is strong and for the most part respected by the public. Shooting deer over bait will undermine that respect.

We are also very fortunate to have an incredible Game and Fish Department. Headed by Director Jeb Williams and a team of professional wildlife biologists. They are the experts. If they say baiting helps spread disease and it threatens our deer population I believe them. They should not be prohibited from doing what they think is right to protect our precious wildlife.

I urge the committee to recommend a "Do Not Pass" on Senate bill 2137 and vote against the bill when it comes to the floor.

Hello this Matthew Ellingson from the Glenburn area. I am in support of bill SB2137. This bill is one that I dont understand why its even a thing. If we can feed them all year why cant we hunt over it. Plus have you seen the size of the herds of deer that are 200-300. If CWD was such a big deal they would all be dead. You guys sit and make up your own rules that you dont follow. The head of game and fish needs to be an elected position instead of an appointed one. If the game and fish really was concerned about cwd the whole state would have a ban on feeding, not just hunting over bait in select units. Thats why this whole no hunting over feed is just a ban base on hunting ethics not real science. That is why I support bill SB2137. To give hunters the actual freedom to hunt how they want not how the game and fish mismanagers feel is ethical.

Sincerely  
Matthew Ellingson

Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

My name is Lee Zimmerman and I am writing in support of SB 2137. We are a farm and ranch operation in McHenry County. Over the years we have developed the land for agricultural purposes to feed our livestock and this has definitely played a huge role in the abundance of wildlife in the area. As a landowner and avid sportsmen I feel that we should have the right to supplemental feed wildlife whether it be deer, turkeys or small game animals. The restrictions that the North Dakota Game and Fish have enforced on the use of hunting big game over bait in specified units to control the spread of CWD is unjustified and counterproductive. As an outdoorsman I watch these animals congregate in alfalfa fields, small grains and harvested row crops. Hunting is an option as baiting should be, the choice to do so or not has adversely affected hunters who are disadvantaged whether this may be a youth, elderly, nonland owner or handicapped sportsman. Bait or no bait, deer are as social as humans, they travel the same corridors to and from feeding and bedding areas, they socialize whether it's a 10 acre food plot or 200 acre alfalfa field these animals are always generally within arms reach of each other.

We live 4 miles from a unit where baiting is not restricted, in the wintertime our farm will more than double the normal number of deer, turkeys and small game animals. These animals travel 10-20 miles to a winter range. We have large amounts of corn silage, grain corn, screenings and alfalfa hay that is all in our feed yards. As a landowner I'm not complaining nor am I asking for someone to feed the wildlife for us, for years we have fed the wildlife away from our feed yards October through April to control the damage that occurs on our expensive commodities. We leave acres of standing crop not just as food plots for hunting but because we care for the wildlife also. This has helped keep the animals at large away from our feed areas and cattle pens along with predators that harm our livestock. We have learned that if we can spread the feed out and use multiple locations to feed, this keeps the animals less concentrated and more spread out.

In closing, we will not prevent the spread of disease whether there is baiting or no baiting. Agriculture, food plots, cropland, watering holes are all a necessity to keep our wildlife alive and thriving in the state of North Dakota. As landowners and sportsmen, we care about conservation and our rights. As a parent and avid hunter, I care about the next generation and our youth. Please support SB 2137.

Sincerely,

Lee Zimmerman

6144 Sandhills Rd

Towner, ND 58788

leez123@gmail.com

## Curtis Olafson

North Dakota State Senate (2006-2012)  
 Olafson Farm and Ranch (Est. 1883)  
 13041 84<sup>th</sup> Street Northeast  
 Edinburg, North Dakota 58227  
 Email: [colafson@polarcomm.com](mailto:colafson@polarcomm.com)  
 701-265-2356 Cellular

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Chairman Porter and Committee Members,

I am writing in opposition to Senate Bill 2137. For the record, Curtis Olafson, former District 10 State Senator in Pembina and Cavalier counties from 2006 to 2012. My professional background also includes a Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science from NDSU. I am a lifelong (now retired) registered cattle breeder, farmer and earthmoving construction business owner.

In my capacity as the manager of our cattle operation in our family-owned businesses, I have decades of experience in animal disease control and prevention.

I was the prime sponsor of SB 2351 in the 2009 session. That bill would have prohibited the artificial feeding of big game and the hunting of big game over bait. My motivation for introducing that legislation was the outbreak of tuberculosis in Minnesota just across the river from my district in northeast North Dakota. It was catastrophic to wildlife and to the cattle industry. I did not get bogged down in the debate over the ethics of hunting over bait. That is an arbitrary debate. The science behind the risk inherent to congregating animals via artificial feeding over a bait pile is not arbitrary. I stuck to the science.

I also want to share with you that I am not a deer hunter and have not hunted deer for several decades. Also, I started a 3-year dispersal of my cattle herd 10 years ago and do not own any cattle. As we say in the Legislature, "I have no dog in this fight."

With that background, I am writing to warn you about what you, as legislators, could potentially be setting yourselves up for with the passage of this legislation. In Minnesota, things got very ugly during the outbreak. What follows are some excerpts from Minnesota newspaper stories covering the outbreak:

October 1, 2010 From the Rochester Post Bulletin:

***"In September 2005, the ranch's yard was filled with cattle trucks, workers and state agency representatives. A lone cowboy chose to gather the cattle one last time. Skime moved through the pastures, heading the cattle to the yard. There others helped load cattle on the trucks as BAH and USDA officials sealed the loads.***

***They shipped 1,172 animals including 600 cows, said Skime.***

***The ranch, once filled with people and trucks, was empty when the last truck rolled away. Skime and his wife, Bernice, stood alone and he cried.***

***In the Modified Accredited Status Zone, 46 out of 67 herds were depopulated using state funding."***

Note "state funding." "Depopulated" is a kinder, gentler way to say they sent them all to slaughter.

February 24, 2009 From the Twin Cities Pioneer Press:

***DNR helicopter surveys completed in early February show that there are about 660 deer, an estimated 4.1 deer per square mile, in the 164-square-mile bovine TB core area.***

***During Feb-April 2008, ground and aerial sharpshooters took 937 deer from the core area.***

You read that right. They were using sharpshooters in helicopters to kill as many deer as they possibly could in the outbreak area. This was not for sport. It was a necessity to bring the outbreak under control. Just imagine if such a scenario unfolded in your legislative district. Both livestock producers and hunters would be, understandably, seeking answers as to what happened and why. They will be looking to you for answers. The taxpayers of North Dakota will also be asking why you are spending millions of dollars to control an outbreak that might have been prevented.

There are several problems with SB 2137. It strictly prohibits the ND Game and Fish from prohibiting the all-too-common practice of using bait for hunting purposes. There is no “unless” or “except” language in the bill to address the proper response by the department to control a disease outbreak. Game and Fish officials are trained professionals and have quick access to other professionals in wildlife biology. Passing this legislation will hamstring their ability to respond to an outbreak.

The discussion on limiting artificial feeding or hunting over bait often centers around Chronic Wasting Disease, which is indeed a serious concern. However, I would submit that a tuberculosis outbreak is a much bigger concern. The newspaper excerpts I cited above details why that is the case.

There was a great deal of debate over SB 2351 in the 2009 session. I had a stack of scientific research studies on my desk in the Senate that were several inches thick, supporting my position that this practice was a threat to animal health. I challenged many of the opponents to bring me just one scientific research study that was nationally published, peer reviewed, and was based on the research of a professionally accredited wildlife biologist that concluded that congregating big game animals over a concentrated bait pile was not a threat to animal health. I am still waiting to receive such a research study from the opponents.

I urge you to give SB 2137 a DO NOT PASS recommendation.

Curtis Olafson, North Dakota State Senate 2006-2012

Testimony of  
Richard Nelson  
On  
SB2137

Deer hunting is an important and valued social and cultural part of North Dakota. In order for citizens to continue the honored tradition of deer hunting our deer herd must be managed by professionals with education and training in big game management. For the benefit of all deer hunters.

But, SB 2137 would undercut professional deer management. Because it would prevent the ND Game and Fish Department biologists from taking appropriate and objective steps to control Chronic Wasting Disease.

Therefore, I am respectfully requesting that each member of this committee vote NO on SB2137. Your vote for professional management will ensure our deer herd remains healthy and that deer hunting can continue.

Respectfully Submitted  
6 March 2025

Richard Nelson  
1327 Pin Oak Loop  
Bismarck,ND. 58501  
ndflyfisher@gmail.com

House E & NR Chairman and Committee Members

I'm asking for your vote in FAVOR of SB2137 to reinstate hunting over supplemental feed. I've been a landowner in Burleigh County since February of 2011. I've done projects each year to enhance this property for all wildlife. We've planted 1400 trees seeded 14 acres of corn and other food plot crops. Planted mixtures of native prairie grass along with developing fresh water sources using a water supply from South Central Regional Water District. I've observed nothing but good things happen in support of the areas wildlife.

I'm 69 years old and enjoy the safety of sitting in a ground blind observing wildlife and bowhunting for deer. My days of hunting from tree stands or backpacking into remote wilderness areas are precious memories. Please vote in favor of SB2137 as it is written clean and to the point. Reinstating legal hunting over supplemental feed sources.

Scott Schmidt

Sportsman/Landowner

1310 Bayview Court

Bismarck, ND. 58504

701-400-8615

Senate Bill 2137 in North Dakota seeks to restrict the ability of the Game and Fish Department to regulate baiting practices for big game hunting on private lands. This bill undermines the department's authority and could have serious consequences for wildlife management and conservation efforts in the state.

Baiting has been linked to the spread of wildlife diseases, particularly Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), which is a growing concern for North Dakota's deer and elk populations. By allowing unrestricted baiting, SB 2137 could exacerbate disease transmission, leading to long-term harm to wildlife health and hunting opportunities.

Additionally, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department is staffed with experts who base their decisions on scientific research and extensive experience in wildlife management. By limiting their ability to regulate baiting, SB 2137 compromises their ability to implement effective, evidence-based strategies that protect both wildlife populations and the interests of responsible hunters.

For these reasons, I urge lawmakers to reject SB 2137 and allow the Game and Fish Department to continue its important role in protecting North Dakota's wildlife and maintaining sustainable hunting practices.

As a resident and hunter in North Dakota I am writing in opposition. Why would anyone allow the spread of any disease. Feeding only amplifies the chances of spreading. Lets move forward to create a healthier population and make sure wildlife is thriving and around for the next generation.

Ben Mallow

West Fargo

To Whom it may Concern

While I do not have a stance on baiting ethics, I do have a stance on legislation or ballot initiatives that seek to restrict or control the ability of the wildlife professionals to fulfill their statutory and constitutional duties. Duties that require them to manage for sustainable populations of wildlife for current and future generations, and as stated in Article XI, Section 27 of the North Dakota Constitution, "Hunting, trapping, and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage and will be forever preserved for the people and managed by law and regulation for the public good."

The North Dakota Game and Fish does not ban baiting in the whole state, just in units that have had positive cases of CWD. CWD is a real threat if measures are not taken to slow the spread. Other states have not taken CWD as a threat and now have deer herds that are being affected and as a result reduced opportunity for hunters.

The management of deer in North Dakota is not a private property issue. Wildlife is owned by all North Dakotans and not I individual.

For these reasons I urge you to vote NO on SB 2137.

Thank you

Dirk McWhorter

I am a landowner and sportsman. I am writing this in opposition of 2025 SB2137. Even though I am a landowner I don't feel I have the right to do anything on my land that the Game and Fish feels is not good for the health of wildlife populations.

This bill will restrict the ability of the ND Game and Fish Department to do what science is telling them to do to slow the spread of CWD and other diseases through the ND deer population. I feel if this bill passes it will be bad for ND wildlife and set a bad precedent for future issues where a government department, like the ND Game and Fish, is paid by the ND residents to do a job based on scientific data. Only to not be able to do what science is telling them to do just because of, in this case, a group that cares more for their ability to easily kill a deer rather than truly caring for the health of the deer population.

This would be like the ND residents paying for all the senators and representatives to take their precious time to go to Bismarck, review all these bills every two years, give your opinion, but then we won't let them vote on the bills. This wouldn't allow them to make any changes for a better future and would be a waste of their time.

There is no argument that the concentration of any animal, including humans, will spread diseases faster. Eliminating baiting won't stop CWD but it will significantly slow it down. I have heard that an argument for this bill is that the Game and Fish isn't consistent on controlling baiting. Some units can bait, and others can't. That's not being inconsistent. They are restricting baiting only in units where there has been a documented case of CWD. That is why some units can and can't bait. That is being proactive and doing what makes sense on a step-by-step basis. They will also re-allow baiting again in a restricted unit if no documented cases of CWD are found again in that unit after several years.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. Please vote no on SB2137.

Joe Keler

House Chair and members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee

SB2137- Please support as written with no amendments

My name is Andy Buntrock and I live on a farm with my wife and two young daughters who both love to hunt. I am asking you to support **SB2137** that will allow the use of feed while hunting big game on my own personal/private land. I am asking you to support this bill for these brief reasons, along with my verbal testimony:

- It is already legal to feed big game to any extent, at anytime, and in any location in the state, but the minute my daughters or I pick up a bow to hunt near feed it becomes illegal under current law because it spreads CWD, per the NDG&F. This doesn't make the least bit of sense and can be rectified by passing SB2137.
- Our unit 3C was added to the CWD restricted list so we are allowed to still feed, but not hunt over that feed. This unit lost 90-95% of its deer to EHD or Blue Tongue a few years ago. To our dismay the NDG&F response to this massive die off to EHD is that it is simply natural and just needs to run its course. Why have we spent nearly \$1 million dollars on CWD when it has only killed one single deer in the state of ND (these are NDG&F numbers). Unfortunately, the herd is dead from other causes and there is no attention put on EHD since there isn't federal dollars tied to it like CWD.
- We need to put the government in check. Our property rights are being exploited while the department pulls in more funding for testing and grants through CWD. Passing SB2137 as it is written, in a very simple manner will put things back in check.

Thank you for your time, service to our legislative process and the opportunity to submit testimony.

Andy Buntrock

Menoken ND

## SB2137

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Russell Senske. I am natural resources professional and educated in restoration ecology. I will be the first to admit Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a complex disease. I think you all can agree with that by listening to the testimony for this bill SB2137 and last session the testimony for HB1151, that CWD is not a straight forward disease and fires up the sportsman of this state. However, what we do know is that this disease is real, it's 100% fatal, has no cure and there is no foreseeable solution to eradication. So why would anyone who cares about healthy deer herds want to limit the tools of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department (NDGF) who is mandated to manage the deer herds of this state? Limiting the NDGFs ability to adaptively manage deer is shortsighted and hypocritical. Ask yourself, why would a state agency lie about the disease and alienate the residents who help fund the NDGF? I think you can agree that a full set of tools is needed to effectively manage a fatal disease as complex as this. So why limit these wildlife professionals who have dedicated their careers to the residents and wildlife of this state? If this method of limiting a Department's ability to operate was applied to any other agency I think it was raise a lot of eyebrows and concerns. Leave the auditing to the auditors, law enforcement to the police and wildlife management to the wildlife biologists.

What is going on here is ballot box biology, and this a dangerous precedent to set. Seeing the names of those are support this bill, have openly opposed unsuccessful attempt at ballot box biology when trying stop the harvest of Bobcat and Mountain lions in Colorado and the successful effort to legislatively require Colorado to re introduce gray wolves. This concept works both ways, so be careful.

Russell Senske

I strongly oppose Senate Bill 2137, as the reasoning behind baiting deer is fundamentally flawed. Regardless of the quantity used, baiting disrupts natural patterns by drawing deer away from others a phenomenon known as herd privatization. This practice represents a significant loss of opportunity for many.

The repercussions of baiting extend beyond this. It contributes to rising land prices, enables out-of-state manipulation, promotes corporate canned hunting, and undermines multi-generational ranching traditions and neighborly cooperation. Moreover, while Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a well-known concern, other illnesses such as Tuberculosis, Brucellosis, and Acidosis must also be taken into account.

In conclusion, I urge us to place our trust in the expertise of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. Their mission is to ensure the health and sustainability of our wildlife, and they deserve our support not opposition rooted in misguided assumptions.

I implore our legislators to reject this ill-conceived bill outright.

Thank you.

Todd Boechler

## House Energy and Natural Resources Committee

### Opposing Testimony on SB 2137

Robert M. Illg

March 7, 2025

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Robert M. Illg. I am a lifelong sportsman, bowhunter, and resident of Bismarck, North Dakota.

As a sportsman, my success is not measured by how many trophies I have on the wall or how much meat is in my freezer each fall. It is, however, measured by the legacy I leave behind for my kids and future generations. I write today so I can say in the future how proud I am to be measured by how many lives I have touched and the impact I have had on wildlife, and most importantly, that I have done my part to have a positive impact.

I was a bit conflicted about writing today. As a non-native to North Dakota, I bring a different perspective. Hunting public land in this state and many other states across our nation, I have yet to need to bait a big game animal. This bill will not decrease participation in hunting and certainly doesn't expand opportunity; if anything, it limits opportunity. If everyone holding a tag is successful, fewer tags are given out, and if people are instantly successful, participation drops as well. We could all use a bit more patience, something learned in the field.

To consider crippling the Game and Fish Department by removing this management option is not based on science but rather emotion. Adding an expiration date to the bill does nothing but cause confusion and reopen the debate after much damage has been done to both the resource and the agency.

I know it's not a popular stance to go against baiting or supplemental feeding, but supporting anything that threatens the future of our resources is incomprehensible.

This is not a CWD exists or doesn't exist issue; it's a baiting bill.

Is CWD the propaganda flavor of the year, possibly the decade?

In an age of so much information and disinformation available, who or what source should we trust? The supporters of this bill, who are out there every day and see it firsthand, who also claim the disease doesn't exist? Remember, CWD has only been in ND since 2009, so they have 14 years of experience with a small handful of animals.

How about a professional wildlife veterinarian and an agency tasked with managing wildlife, utilizing peer-supported biology? They have spent an exorbitant amount of time studying wildlife diseases and dedicated entire careers to managing wildlife.

The low prevalence of CWD that the Game and Fish Department has successfully maintained is quite possibly a hindrance to opening people's eyes about CWD. Unfortunately, if the disease increases, there is no turning back.

Nobody leaves a compromise 100% satisfied, but they should be able to live with the results. Cervids cannot live with CWD. Sportsmen can live without hunting over bait.

Thank you for your consideration.

I respectfully ask you for a DO NOT PASS on SB2137.

Cody Hilliard  
280 102nd St NW  
Souris, ND 58783  
(701) 460-7295

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2137. My name is Cody Hilliard, and I am a lifelong North Dakotan and dedicated hunter. I support this bill because it upholds private property rights while addressing the unintended negative consequences of banning hunting over supplemental feed.

As landowners and hunters, we understand the importance of managing our wildlife and habitat responsibly. Allowing hunting over supplemental feed ensures that more nutrition is made available to deer, benefiting their health and survival, particularly during North Dakota's harsh winters. When baiting is prohibited, it reduces the incentive for hunters and landowners to provide supplemental feed, ultimately limiting the amount of food available for all deer and putting additional strain on deer populations.

Banning hunting over supplemental feed creates unintended consequences that go beyond hunting itself. Deer that lack access to adequate nutrition are more susceptible to disease, predation, and winter mortality. Supplemental feeding not only benefits the individual deer that are hunted but also contributes to the overall health of local herds by introducing additional food resources into the habitat. This practice supports healthier, more resilient deer populations, which aligns with the long-term goals of wildlife conservation.

SB 2137 also respects the rights of private property owners to manage their land and wildlife as they see fit. Decisions about the use of supplemental feed on private property should remain with the landowners and hunters who are actively involved in managing these resources.

Furthermore, surrounding states are actively feeding their deer herds during harsh winters to ensure their survival, and they have thriving herd populations.

I urge this committee to support SB 2137 to protect private property rights, ensure the health of our deer herds, and sustain the practices that make North Dakota a leader in responsible wildlife management. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Megan Langley  
280 102nd St NW  
Souris, ND 58783  
(701) 303-0840

My name is Megan Langley, and I am a lifelong resident of North Dakota, a passionate hunter, and someone who deeply values the traditions and economic contributions of hunting in our state.

Over the years, I have witnessed firsthand how hunting enriches our communities, both culturally and economically. From my own experience as an archery hunter, I understand the significant investments of time and money that hunters contribute. For example, my preparation for a single season involved thousands of dollars in equipment, fuel, food, and supplies—expenditures that not only support local businesses but also bolster the state's rural economy. Hunting is more than recreation; it is a driver of economic activity, particularly in our smaller communities.

SB 2137 recognizes the importance of allowing responsible use of supplemental feed for hunting on private property. Baiting is a tool that levels the playing field for hunters, particularly those without access to large tracts of land or extensive resources. It enhances hunting success rates and ensures that participation remains accessible for newcomers and seasoned hunters alike. Restricting baiting, as has been done in many units, has led to a measurable decline in direct economic spending by hunters, as documented in the North Dakota Game & Fish Department's reports.

Supporting SB 2137 is not only about ensuring fair access for hunters but also about sustaining and growing the economic impact hunting has in North Dakota. Allowing baiting on private land aligns with our values of respecting private property rights while maintaining the viability of an important industry. Furthermore, it complements the state's efforts to attract and retain residents by showcasing North Dakota as a place where outdoor traditions thrive.

I urge this committee to support SB 2137 to preserve the accessibility, success, and economic contributions of hunting in our state. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Good morning members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Mark Anderson. I hunt deer. I am a landowner. I am opposed to Senate Bill 2137.

1. Please pay close attention to the disease epidemiologists, veterinarians, or other true experts that have or will testify on scientifically documented information on the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease.
2. Deer hunters have many new technologies, innovations, and tactics available to kill a deer:

Spotting scopes, range-finders, rifle & scope combinations capable of killing deer at well over a half-mile, computer programs that calculate the exact aiming point at incredible distances by accounting for the temperature, elevation above sea level, wind, distance and vertical angle to the deer; bi-pods, tri-pods, scent blocker sprays, scent-blocker clothing, doe-in-heat scent to attract bucks, manual deer calls, electronic deer calls, deer decoys, trail cameras remotely monitored 24-7, sound-amplifying head phones to hear deer movement, noise suppressors for rifles and pistols, tree stands, tower blinds, heaters, camouflage clothing for archers, compound bows with as much as 90% pull reduction, bow stabilizers, mechanical string releases, adjustable bow sights, bowstring silencers, super-light arrows with much less drop than was possible years ago, scopes on muzzle-loading rifles, dogs to help find a killed deer, ATV's and snowmobiles to take on trails blocked by snow or to retrieve a kill off the trail. I might have missed more.

With the tools and tactics now available, most hunters have proven they don't need to use bait to harvest a deer and enjoy the experience.

3. At a recent Game & Fish advisory meeting, one veteran hunter said that many youths are being taught today how to kill deer, but they are not being taught how to hunt. He was right; the emphasis has shifted away from hunting toward simple killing. I hunt deer on my own land only, and even though I do not use trail cameras or baiting, I must admit that killing a deer is still easy to do; maybe too easy.
4. Most of the deer tag holders get a chance to shoot a deer, and do so without the use of bait. The unspoken problem for too many hunters is the relentless drive to kill a trophy buck. They want every possible tactic available to help them kill a trophy buck, even if that tactic poses a risk to the health of the deer herd. Allowing baiting makes it easier to kill deer, but it does nothing to increase the deer population or protect the herd from CWD.

Please, Representatives, vote against more Chronic Wasting Disease. Vote No on SB 2137.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Mark A. Anderson



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Fish and Wildlife  
500 Lafayette Rd  
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 06, 2025

Senator Larry Luick, Chair  
North Dakota Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee  
600 E Boulevard Ave.  
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Chairman Luick and Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee members,

On behalf of the Fish and Wildlife Division within the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), I am writing to express my concerns with Senate Bill 2137. This bill would eliminate the authority of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department to adopt rules or policies that restrict the use of supplemental feed for hunting of big game animals. Not only will this bill impact wildlife populations within North Dakota, but it also affects wildlife in bordering states and provinces.

Concentrating wildlife by baiting or feeding can facilitate the transmission, establishment, and spread of diseases and parasites. It is vital that state wildlife agencies maintain the capacity to regulate these practices and address disease concerns in wildlife populations. Between 2005 and 2012, feeding and baiting restrictions were a critical science-based tool that MNDNR utilized to successfully eradicate bovine tuberculosis in a wild white-tailed deer population. This helped prevent tuberculosis from becoming established in our deer populations and spreading to neighboring states. Minnesota is now utilizing this tool to address chronic wasting disease both within the state and along the shared border between Minnesota and North Dakota. Feeding and baiting deer in North Dakota will increase transmission and spread of chronic wasting disease in both our states and directly hinder long-term management efforts to limit the disease.

I encourage the members of the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee to follow recommendations from the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Resolution in opposition to the baiting and feeding of cervids (adopted in 2018; attached) and allow the North Dakota Game and Fish Department to regulate the intentional baiting and feeding of deer. Directors of state wildlife agencies across the Midwest voted to support this resolution and recognize baiting and feeding as a significant wildlife management concern. Maintaining the authority to implement regulations designed to protect the health of our wildlife is essential for state wildlife agencies to ensure the long-term viability of our wildlife populations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly Straka". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kelly" and last name "Straka" clearly legible.

Kelly Straka, DVM MPH

Director, Division of Fish and Wildlife

*Equal Opportunity Employer*

## **RESOLUTION REGARDING THE BAITING AND FEEDING OF CERVIDS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF DISEASE TRANSMISSION AND ESTABLISHMENT**

WHEREAS, baiting (placement of food by humans to aid hunter harvest), recreational feeding (placement of food by humans to aid in wildlife viewing for entertainment) and supplemental feeding (placement of food by humans to increase the nutrition available to wildlife) congregate animals and increase transmission of infectious diseases;

WHEREAS, increased transmission of diseases in deer may place wildlife, domestic livestock and public health at risk;

WHEREAS, some infectious diseases such as chronic wasting disease (CWD) and bovine tuberculosis (TB) may remain infectious at bait or feed sites after the feed or bait no longer exists;

WHEREAS, baiting and feeding artificially concentrates deer and their activity, facilitating both animal-to-animal contact and exposure to potentially disease-contaminated sites;

WHEREAS, evidence to date suggests that restrictions on feeding quantity would not mitigate the potential for disease transmission and that putative mitigating practices such as spreading feed or bait over a specified area, or restricting the kinds of food items that can be used does not substantially reduce the potential risk for disease transmission;

WHEREAS, baiting and feeding may both change social dynamics among animals and increase contacts between otherwise disparate individuals, groups, or species-another risk factor for disease transmission;

WHEREAS, peer-reviewed research suggests the effects of baiting for increasing harvest is insignificant;

WHEREAS, diseases such as CWD and TB can result in devastating economic losses and/or significant ecological impacts;

WHEREAS, effective communication, education and enforcement are enhanced when rules and regulations are consistent across state and provincial boundaries;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, MAFWA acknowledges the social and political sensitivity associated with restricting baiting and feeding cervids.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, MAFWA agrees with the current wildlife research and expertise that illustrates the negative effects of baiting and feeding of cervids on disease transmission and establishment.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, MAFWA recommends advancing this issue of baiting and feeding restrictions to AFWA for development of a national position on baiting and feeding of cervids to reduce the risk of disease transmission and establishment.

January 15 2025

SB 2137

Mr. Charman and members of the committee,

My name is Mr. Matthew Peterson. I am a bow instructor, farmer, rancher, carpenter, nature conservationist, wildlife enthusiast, avid sportsman, etc. etc., I could fill a whole page with names but none the less. There are just a few points I would like to make.

Firstly, the value of the animals from one person to the next including the environment itself. As a rancher I raise my own beef to consume. Many do not have that luxury and have to find other ways to feed their family. Wild game is one of those. Some do not have the access to large acreage for hunting as others and this is where baiting helps ease that burden of feeding one's family. The environment has these animals included in the natural course of life from being food on the prairie to food on a table as well as the natural carriers for many things such as plants, diseases and insects.

Second, the health of the animals of concern and their predators, that being both disease and natural predators. The main predator I bring to concern is the coyote. They can diminish a herd in small amount of time so why are we limited in our pursuit of them to protect those herds while neighboring states having less restrictions? Why are we not more concerned with this problem that is so much more widespread? Others have mentioned the numbers tested and the very small percentage of positive tests. Why are those important results not easily found if we are to be educated on facts not just hearsay?

Third, I see these animals naturally gather. In the winter I have seen herds of 200 and sometimes 300 or more. During summer months I have seen many larger groups as well, very commonly 4-6 in open fields and more than 10 in well covered areas. Previous baited areas I personally have not seen more than 10-15. I believe these to be local animal and not ones that have traveled long distances.

I have read others concern with this bill on both sides of constitutional, ethical, moral etc... Is not the constitution there for the people? As times change so has our constitution both State and Federal in directing how law is governed by keeping in line with checks and balances.

I thank you for your time and consideration.



Mr. Matthew Peterson

I am writing my testimony in opposition of SB 2137

I have been a North Dakota resident my whole life and my family has lived in this state for 5 generations each one of them being hunters. I have grown to love the natural resources that we are so fortunate to have in this state. SB 2137 would have dramatic impact on our game and fish agency from making decisions and putting in place laws to better our natural resources. Growing up I wanted to be a biologist more than anything, I went to college at the University of North Dakota to obtain a wildlife biology degree to have an impact on the things that I care most about, the wildlife that call our state home. This bill would hinder and set a dangerous precedent going forward that the game and fish will not have lawful grounds to make other decisions and laws. Biological decisions should be made by professionals who have dedicated their whole lives to bettering resources and have the resources best interest at heart. The wildlife of North Dakota is not any one persons to own, this is a biological issue that could have ramifications that will effect our future generations opportunities. The ban on baiting does not take away any opportunity from the public, the public still has every opportunity to hunt and take deer. The ban on baiting is a way to help slow the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease, if CWD gains a foothold in North Dakota this alone could take opportunity away from the sportsmen and women of North Dakota. I ask that you vote no on this bill not for me but for the future opportunities for not only my generation but the ones that are to follow.

**Wildlife Feeding (and why it is so ethically wrong):**

March 7, 2025

The Feeding (Baiting) of Wildlife is an unnatural process to the Big Game species involved.

It is extremely disruptive (example presented below); to the land-owners and their families, friends and permissible hunters, that are trying to hunt within a square 4-5 mile radius, wherein feeding/baiting of Wildlife is taking place (in the middle of this area).

Feeding: the application of grains, hay, vegetables, fruits, nuts/seeds and minerals is a natural process to Livestock, not to Wildlife. The “Wild” in Wildlife is there to denote Big Game species that traverse, forage and navigate the land--without regard for property boundaries, and thus they are not to be drawn into an area on a seasonal and periodic basis—in order to be served up “meals on wheels”. The taming-down and domestic-conditioning of Wildlife should be abhorrent to any “real” Hunter.

The State governing bodies are commonly referred to as “Game and Fish”; we all do “hunting” for Game and “fishing” for Fish, we don’t get to fish (nor do we want to) in a Fish Hatchery, and therefore, don’t need (nor do we desire) to hunt in a “Feed Factory”.

So called “hunting” in, on, and around a feeding (baiting) area is not hunting, it’s just killing. Hunters come to hunt the Dakota’s, especially from East of Bismarck, because of our wide-open spaces and the opportunity to see as far as you can. We pride ourselves on “spot and stalking” and usually a lot of “walking and glassing”. We don’t need to utilize a tree-stand, such as is necessary for a heavily forested area, and God-forbid, we don’t need to start hunting with a blind or stand over a feeding/baiting area.

Down on the ND/SD State Line we are living with such an area; with 20 sections of Big Game affected, wherein our neighbor is feeding/baiting during the late-fall hunting period. After over a dozen years of this continued process, they have gotten very good at it: the timing of periodic feedings with the first hard frosts (mid-to late October), the ramping up of periodic feedings and product feed-mix (early to mid November), and then a regular daily feed application (laced with distiller’s grain-referred to as “deer cocaine”) to the end of November and into December. This process: starts with “enticing in”: the does from the surrounding area (4-5 miles in each direction) by late October, and by mid-November with the advent of “Rut”, the bucks are looking around and wondering where the girls went, and in no time all the deer from 20 sections are concentrated on his Ranch/Farm. So, when the dinner bell rings (main feeding application at dusk), there are nearly 300 deer and nearly 100 elk dining within an 80-acre area (elk first and deer second). Many of the bucks used to wander back to the 20-section area to bed-down during the day, but by combining morning/night feeding and special product feed, the deer/elk don’t wander off his property during the day, thus they are being “feed-held” till the lethal gun season is over.

These actions allowed for the desired result; as now, only a few bucks are taken (killed) outside of his property. This situation allows him to retain all the bucks (especially the big bucks) for his own archery hunting (ground blind) program in mid-December, and is shared with a few select (mostly out-of-state hunters after the ND and SD Rifle Seasons end).

The Residents/Big Game Hunters in North Dakota should not want to see this situation become replicated in other areas. The hunting-affect to the neighbors, of which I can provide at least 6 large rancher/farmer neighbors willing to vouch for this letter, has been nothing short of devastating. We are talking about a profound change; where there was 10-20 deer in each adjacent section, there are now none; maybe one or two, and/or maybe a small buck, and elk only passing through. The only bucks shot in the last couple of years by the neighbors; was due to larger bucks escorting does out of the feeding area during the Rut, and trying to hide them on neighbor's land.

The Ranchers/Farmers in the area are at their wits-end over this situation. Their families/and friends have been hunting (successfully) on their own property for 5-6 generations, You want to talk about something "personal" this is it, and indirectly a terrible violation of "property rights" We need at least an "Administrative Rule" similar to SD to help combat this situation, otherwise this could lead to some form of Civil breakdown; why would hunters come out to Bowman County and spend their money and/or buy a license. If the deer are being "sucked out" on a timetable, why wouldn't hunters take it upon themselves to hunt and kill bucks by any means possible--prior to (and after) Rifle Season.

Sincerely, Dave Stearns (and Stearns Ranches), Bowman Co and Harding Co Rancher,  
Bowman HS and UND Grad, Retired CA/OR—CEO and MN/CA--CPA

SD Administrative Rule:

**Methods prohibited.** A person may not establish, utilize, or maintain a bait station from August 1 through February 1 and from March 15 through May 31 to attract any big game animal, including wild turkey

A bait station is a location where grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, hay, minerals, or any other natural food materials, commercial products containing natural food materials, or by-products of food materials are placed or maintained as an attractant to big game animals for the purpose of hunting.

TESTIMONY OF JOHN BRADLEY  
NORTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
SENATE BILL 2137  
HOUSE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
MARCH 7, 2025

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

For the record, I am John Bradley, Executive Director of the North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF). NDWF opposes SB 2137.

Our members and affiliates bring ideas forward through a delegate and resolution process, and just like you are elected to represent your districts, they represent their clubs and their members throughout the state. Our affiliates supported via our resolution process that, and I quote:

“Therefore, be it resolved that the North Dakota Wildlife Federation supports the North Dakota Game and Fish Chronic Wasting Disease and Surveillance Plan 2023 – 2027 and the proposed actions and strategies to manage and restrict the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease.”

SB 2137 would severely undermine the North Dakota Game and Fish Department’s (NDG&F) authority and ability to manage deer and deer hunting with the best-available science. Specifically, the bill removes the authority from NDG&F to issue rules or adopt a policy or practice prohibiting the supplemental feed on private property for the hunting of big game animals. The bill, and the removal of management authority from NDG&F, is a direct attempt to undermine chronic wasting disease (CWD) management efforts in the state and would have a detrimental impact on managing other diseases (bovine tuberculosis) as well.

The practice of baiting and its role in deer management has grown in terms of controversy and complexity in the last decade. Our deer managers are working hard to implement methods and tactics to mitigate the spread of diseases, specifically CWD. The science tells us that supplemental feeding (baiting) increases unnatural, man-made density around a single food source and therefore increases the potential for direct and indirect contact among individuals. We understand that natural congregation occurs in our deer herds, but we shouldn’t remove what we as humans can control from our management toolbox. When it comes to CWD, we are buying our future selves time to figure this disease out and discover new ways to reduce and someday hopefully eliminate CWD from the landscape. Outside of CWD, there are 11 other deer diseases that are thought to be spread by direct contact, including bovine tuberculosis (TB), some of these diseases, left unchecked, can severely impact our livestock producers as well.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) cites that unnatural concentration of cervids facilitates CWD transmission and establishment if CWD prions are present. AFWA, (which is made up from every state game and fish agency, as well as the National Rifle

Association, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Boone and Crockett Club, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, National Wildlife Federation, Wild Sheep Foundation, etc.) lists the prohibition of baiting or feeding wild deer as a best management tool for the prevention of CWD introduction and establishment. SB 2137 intentionally removes this management tool from the authority of NDG&F.

Furthermore, this bill would also have a negative impact on hunting opportunities for sportsmen and women. Healthy wildlife populations are essential to the sustainability of hunting opportunities, and the spread of diseases such as CWD and TB can have a significant impact on these opportunities. By limiting the ability of the department to protect wildlife populations from disease, SB 2137 would also limit the opportunities for deer hunting in the long run. Wildlife management decisions, and especially disease management decisions, should remain in the hands of professional wildlife managers. SB 2137 would result in a massive setback for disease and deer management in North Dakota. We urge a Do Not Pass on SB 2137.

Additional information on Bovine Tuberculosis:

### **Bovine Tuberculosis and Baiting**

Bovine tuberculosis (Bovine TB) is a disease found in mammals caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium bovis* (M. bovis). In North America, Bovine TB is most commonly found in domestic cattle and captive and wild cervids (white-tailed deer, elk, etc.) Bovine TB has been greatly reduced in the cattle industry since the National Cooperative State-Federal Bovine Tuberculosis eradication program began in 1917. Currently, most states are accredited as "Bovine Tuberculosis-free" by the United States Department of Agriculture, however, outbreaks do still occur throughout the United States. Cattle, captive cervids, and wild white-tailed deer are considered reservoir hosts for Bovine TB. A reservoir host is a species in which Bovine TB can persist and be transmitted among individuals within a species or be transmitted to another species. Wild white-tailed deer may pose the greatest threat to the establishment of Bovine TB on the landscape because they move freely across the landscape and may contact multiple domestic cattle herds.

Both Michigan and Minnesota have had outbreaks of Bovine TB in wild white-tailed deer. In September 2005, the first case of bovine tuberculosis (BTB) in 34 years was discovered in Minnesota and led to a loss of Minnesota's Bovine TB free status. In October 2007 and January and February 2008, four additional cattle herds and deer infected with BTB were discovered in Roseau and Beltrami counties and Minnesota's BTB status was changed from "modified accredited advanced" to "modified accredited" in April 2008. Each of these designations increased regulatory requirements (and costs) for animal testing, record keeping, eradication practices, slaughtering and shipments of cattle within state and across state lines. The 2005-2009 BTB outbreak in Minnesota, which involved 12 infected herds, was estimated to cost approximately \$60 million. (Buhr et al., 2009). This estimate did not include the cost of ongoing heightened surveillance efforts in the region, nor the economic impact of the outbreak on the broader Minnesota cattle industry.

#### **How can Bovine TB spread?**

Cattle, captive cervids, and wild white-tailed deer can contract BTB through direct contact with an infected animal, either another deer or cattle or through shared feeding with an infected animal at artificial bait piles, and areas where cattle are fed or cattle feed is stored.

#### **Why is Bovine TB an important issue in wild deer?**

Human health is the main concern; given that Bovine TB is transmissible to humans. Additionally, Bovine TB is not a naturally occurring disease in white-tailed deer. Deer can also be a reservoir for Bovine TB potentially transmitting Bovine TB to uninfected deer and also to uninfected cattle through direct contact or through shared feeding. Because deer are free-ranging they have the potential to contact multiple cattle herds and transmit Bovine TB across the landscape.

#### **Baiting Bans as a Tool**

Bovine tuberculosis (BTB) is spread through similar mechanisms as CWD, making it a useful model for understanding CWD. Baiting and feeding has demonstrably been shown to facilitate increased transmission of BTB in deer. Baiting and feeding enabled the BTB outbreak in Michigan to persist and spread. Infection rates decreased after restrictions were applied. These continue to be a pivotal component of reducing the spread of this disease within deer and limiting the economic impact to the cattle industry.

### **Why is SB 2137 harmful?**

Wildlife management decisions, and especially disease management decisions, should remain in the hands of professional wildlife managers. SB 2137 would result in a massive setback for wildlife and livestock disease in North Dakota. If a Bovine TB outbreak were to occur, the ND Game & Fish Department would be limited in their tools to help the landowner and the livestock industry fight the spread of Bovine TB.

### **Sources:**

Cosgrove MK, O'Brien DJ, Ramsey DSL. 2018. Baiting and feeding revisited: modeling factors influencing transmission of tuberculosis among deer and to cattle. *Front. Vet. Sci.* 5:306

Buhr Brian, McKeever Kyle, Adachi Kenji. 2009. Economic impact of bovine tuberculosis on Minnesota's cattle and beef sector

## **Testimony in Support of SB 2137**

Matt Herman  
Ashley ND

SB 2137 is not about baiting. It is about being able to hunt over bait.

You can dump a bucket of corn and shoot pictures with a camera but not shoot your bow or gun in the name of preventing CWD.

This makes no sense. It would appear that a bow or a gun is more likely to cause CWD than a camera.

Vote for passage of SB 2137. Thank you.

Testimony of the North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society  
By Phil Mastrangelo (#1571)  
SB 2137  
HOUSE ENERGY and NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
March 7, 2025

Chairman Porter and Members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee. For the record, I'm Phil Mastrangelo representing the North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society (the Chapter). The Chapter is a professional organization comprised of over 350 members who are employed throughout North Dakota as wildlife biologists, land managers, educators, wildlife law enforcement officers, and natural resource administrators. The mission of our organization is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain healthy wildlife populations and habitats in North Dakota through science-based management for the benefit of all. SB 2137 is directly at odds with that mission.

We understand the devastating toll that some issues like EHD take on our deer. Yet, no tools exist to alter the course of these outbreaks. However, there are ways to influence how quickly chronic wasting disease spreads, but SB 2137 compromises the health of wildlife populations. Putting lots of unrelated animals in close proximity with each other and their bodily fluids will increase CWD transmission. SB 2137 prevents the Department's ability to curtail this.

While SB 2137 is a reasonable debate over values, it is not science-based. The science on CWD is straightforward. For example, the Game and Fish Department's CWD Management plan references over 30 peer-reviewed scientific studies. That is a strong and robust foundation of evidence from which to base management decisions. We have heard several claims by individuals in favor of SB 2137 that contradict core principles in human and animal health, don't stand up to scientific rigor, cherry-pick or misinterpret single sentences out of context, or misrepresent Game and Fish's actions or intentions. The arguments used to support SB 2137 are not science-based.

Finally, SB 2137 is not for the benefit of all North Dakotans and all North Dakota deer hunters. With authority through the Governor's proclamation, NDGF can manage with flexibility. A core concept of good wildlife management is the ability to respond and adjust as things change on the landscape and as new science emerges. This "adaptive-management" approach is taken off the table when things are set into state law. NDGF has only enacted baiting restrictions where there is established CWD risk, but it has not employed this tool in other parts of the state. That's good, adaptive, and proactive management for the benefit of all. SB 2137 wipes that off the table.

The over 350 professionals the Chapter have devoted their careers to wildlife and habitat conservation in North Dakota. SB2137 is a step in the wrong direction. It compromises wildlife health, it is not science-based, and it is not for the benefit of all. Therefore, we respectfully request a "Do Not Pass" vote on SB 2137.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Phil Mastrangelo  
Lobbyist #1571  
North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society

I am writing in opposition of SB 2137, which would remove the authority of the Department to prohibit or restrict the use of supplemental feed on private property for hunting.

Research has shown that feeding is undisputably bad for wildlife, including big game. It increases transmission of all diseases, not just CWD, and also parasites. Other diseases known to be transmitted at feed sites include bovine tuberculosis, brucellosis, salmonellosis, toxoplasmosis, lungworms, and tapeworms. It changes behavior patterns, makes them more susceptible to vehicle collisions, and many other consequences.

To take away the Department's ability to restrict or prohibit this activity would be to severely hinder their ability to fulfill their mission to protect, conserve, and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitat for sustained public use, which includes mitigating wildlife diseases, some of which can affect people, pets, and livestock.

I urge you to consider the consequences of this legislation and do what is best for the long-term benefit and preservation of North Dakota's wildlife.

Thank you,

Andrea Korman

Wildlife Biologist

**2025 SB 2137 Testimony****Authored by:** Tim Sandstrom**Dear Committee,**

I strongly support SB 2137 and respectfully ask you to vote **DO PASS** on this bill.

Two years ago, I submitted similar testimony supporting HB 1151, which aimed to create a compromise between ethics, the irony of wildlife feeding versus hunting over food sources, and perceived science. Unfortunately, instead of fostering collaboration, a bait-and-switch occurred when some elected legislators voted to kill good-faith efforts.

I understand the North Dakota Game and Fish Department's (NDGF) concerns regarding chronic wasting disease (CWD). The debate about managing CWD continues among game and fish departments, landowners, and hunters nationwide. To this day, there appears to be no definitive solution.

For me, it all comes down to **perception**.

According to the *Fargo InForum*, NDGF Wildlife Chief Casey Anderson stated:

"Baiting causes deer to concentrate more closely than they do naturally in winter. Baiting during hunting season increases the duration of that concentration."

He further explained:

"Disease is spread by urine, saliva, and feces. It's more likely to be spread when they're pulled together in times of year when they normally aren't."

Mr. Anderson's perception is that hunters using bait are more likely to spread disease compared to natural deer congregation.

However, here's an example from my experience:

In 2023, while preparing my testimony for HB 1151, we experienced a particularly tough winter. On my daily drive home, I passed five alfalfa bales. Four bales sat abandoned in an alfalfa field, unused for hay. The fifth bale was purposefully placed in a neighbor's yard to help wildlife survive the winter.

For two months, I observed multiple deer feeding and bedding on these bales, with groups of 20 or more gathering at both the "abandoned" and "purposefully placed" locations.

Using Mr. Anderson's logic, the deer feeding at the four "naturally" abandoned bales posed no elevated risk. Yet, the single bale placed by my neighbor would, according to NDGF's perception, be "more likely" to spread disease.

This inconsistency is hard to reconcile. Additionally, NDGF has no rules, nor is there any legislated law, prohibiting people from feeding wildlife outside the context of hunting.

As you consider recommending the passage of SB 2137, I encourage you to ask: **Who is being more reasonable in these scenarios?** My example is real, and I'm certain you've witnessed or heard of countless similar situations.

I acknowledge that diseases like CWD have impacts, and they can and will spread. However, to single out hunters and landowners for punishment based on perceived risk is unfair—especially when we see far more deer deaths caused by motor vehicles or diseases like Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) than by CWD. And it's not even close.

I respectfully urge you to recommend passage of SB 2137.

**Best regards,**  
Tim Sandstrom

Source – Fargo Inforum: [Bill would stop officials from banning deer baiting in North Dakota](#)

In opposition of Senate Bill 2137. Allow for the fair hunt of wildlife in our state and management of these species.

### **Introductory speech for SB 2137**

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources committee.

I am here today to introduce Senate Bill 2137, a bill to preserve the rights of North Dakotans to engage in supplemental feeding of deer on private property.

Feeding wildlife is a cherished activity in our state, one that allows sportsmen, landowners, and families to interact with nature freely. Currently, this practice is unrestricted in terms of location, time, and quantity—except during hunting season. SB 2137 seeks to address this inconsistency and protect property owners' rights to responsibly manage their land.

In 2010, the NDGFD implemented a regulation prohibiting hunting over bait, citing concerns about Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). While I understand the intent to safeguard our wildlife, it's important to examine the facts:

- Over the past 22 years, 49,596 deer have been tested for CWD in North Dakota, with only 105 detections. Importantly, a detection is not synonymous with disease. A confirmed case requires necropsy to identify brain degeneration.
- To date, only one confirmed deer in North Dakota has died from CWD.

If these figures were related to my livestock, I would find them negligible. Mammalian diseases with such minimal impact would not raise serious concerns. The science simply does not support the level of regulation we currently have.

Moreover, the regulation's focus on bait piles during hunting season seems disconnected from reality. Consider the natural winter gatherings of hundreds of deer in farm and ranch feeding areas—situations far more conducive to disease transmission than a small bait pile. Restricting baiting only during hunting season provides little return on investment in terms of disease prevention.

This legislation is necessary to restore balance and respect for property rights. Property owners should not be told how to manage their land within reasonable limits. If they wish to place feed for wildlife on their property, they have every right to do so.

It's also worth noting that North Dakota's deer population has suffered significant losses in recent years due to drought, epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD), and harsh winters—not CWD. Tag allocations are at historic lows, but CWD is not the cause. The data backs this up.

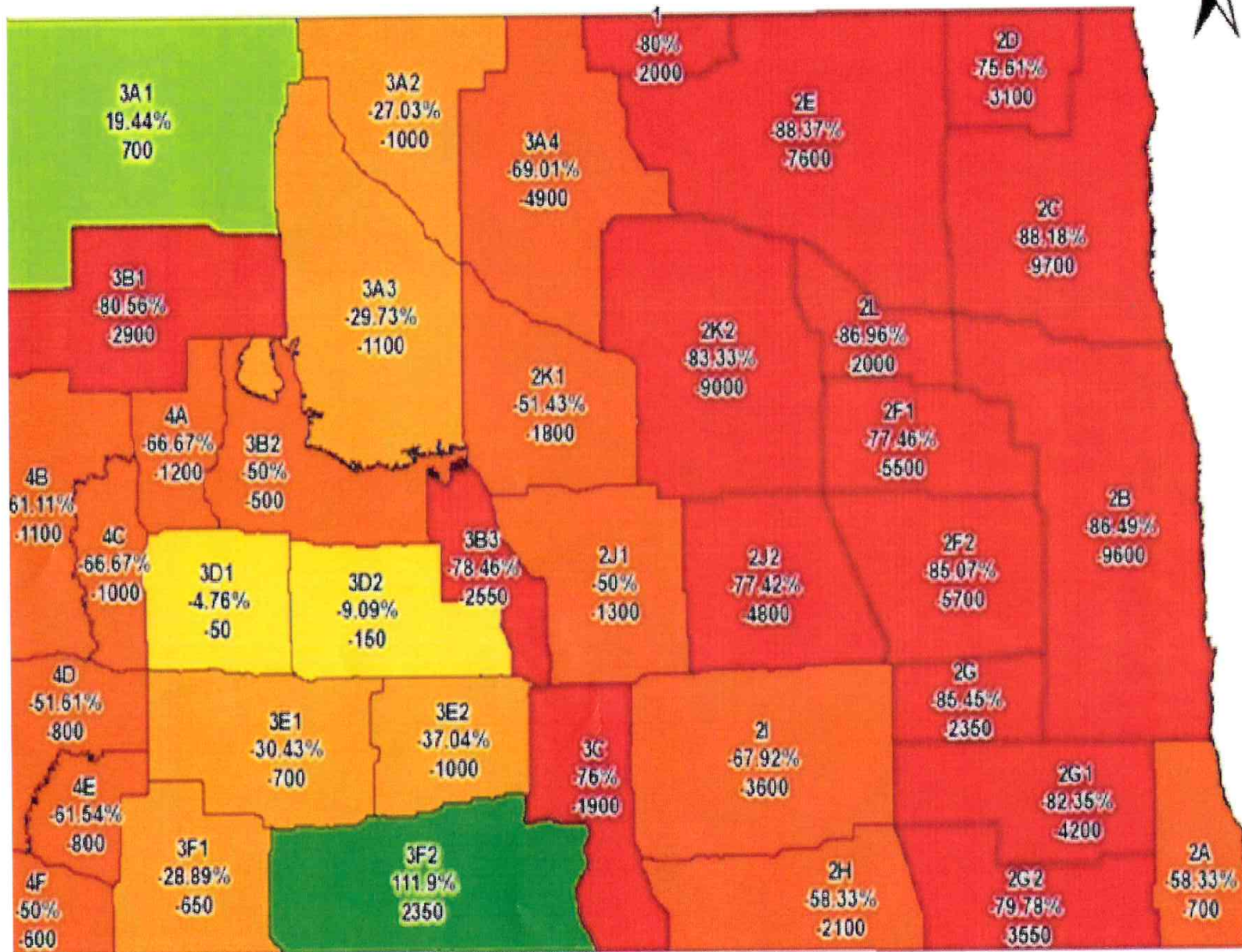
The Department's own cited research acknowledges that feeding restrictions, whether by quantity, location, or type, do not significantly mitigate disease transmission. According to a 2019 report by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, CWD management strategies are based on hypotheses rather than proven science. In North Dakota alone, nearly \$1.8 million has been spent on these efforts—money spent on managing a theoretical risk rather than an evidenced one.

The landowners and sportsmen of North Dakota are asking for the freedom year-round to supplemental feed deer—they are asking for consistency, science-based regulations, and respect for their property rights across every acre of their property without buffers or area restrictions. SB 2137 addresses these concerns by allowing supplemental feeding and hunting over feed on private property.

I urge you to support this commonsense measure that respects the rights of landowners, promotes responsible wildlife management, and aligns with the realities of CWD science.

Thank you. I stand for questions.

# Percent Change in Licenses/Deer Unit, 2007 - 2024



**SB2137 TESTIMONY**  
**PATRICIA STOCKDILL**  
**1450 42<sup>ND</sup> AVE NW**  
**GARRISON ND 58540**  
**(701) 337-6185**  
**stockdill.patricia@gmail.com**

Good morning. My name is Patricia Stockdill, rural Garrison. I come from a background of more than 35 years of natural resource, environmental, energy, and outdoor journalism, researching, interviewing people throughout the U.S., and writing for local, state, regional, and national media. My husband and I own pasture and cropland in two deer hunting units. I've hunted since I was old enough to stumble through buckbrush with my dad and have been in the field from Alaska to Arkansas.

Phasing into semi-retirement, the journalistic habit of researching and asking questions dies slowly. Before writing my testimony I researched and asked questions even though I've covered wildlife, natural resources, and wildlife diseases the majority of my career:

\*What's the N.D. Game and Fish Department's Mission Statement? The answer is on their website home page: **"To protect, conserve, and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitat for sustained public use."**

\*Who does North Dakota's fish and wildlife belong to? The answer is in the Constitution of the State of North Dakota—all of its citizens.

These are two important points: Let's face it; we're talking about transmissible spongiform encephalopathy – CWD - a disease that all scientific research explicitly has found to be contagious and 100 percent fatal. You get it, you die – showing few symptoms until it's well advanced. We're not talking EHD. People reading the research and readily available information regarding wildlife diseases know a tiny biting fly causes EHD – epizootic hemorrhagic disease - not abnormal proteins – prions – that cause CWD. There is zero correlation between the two.

Secondly, it illustrates baiting is not a private property or a landowner right. While we control who can access them, we don't own the deer, turkeys, grouse, pheasants, and moose on our land in 2K1 and 3A3. They rightfully belong to all North Dakotans, whether in a wheelchair in a Fargo care center or on a ranch south of Amidon.

As a writer, hunter, and landowner, I ask: Who can look into the future and know what wildlife diseases will and will not impact not just wildlife, but domestic animals – pets and livestock alike – or humans? Who has the knowledge to tell those who study the most current research, analyze working group studies, and network with scientists and professionals with a common

goal of **protecting, conserving, and enhancing fish and wildlife populations and their habitat for sustained public use** what they can and can't do in order to perform their job?

All mammals, humans and wildlife alike, specifically big game, share some amazing similarities: Several diseases – anthrax, tuberculosis, and rabies, for example – and yes, humans can contract those diseases from mammals, include members of the cervid family – the deer family of moose, elk, mule deer, and white-tailed deer. So far, research hasn't showed CWD to be transmissible from cervids to humans, although there are human, bovine, and domestic sheep variants of CWD equally fatal to those mammals.

Humans and all mammals require basic things for survival: Shelter, water, food, and space – in other words, habitat. The reality is big game species hit the Easy Button when it comes to life in the wild as a survival method. Humans, on the other hand, hit the EZ Button because it's, well, it's EZ. Baiting and supplemental feeding is an unnatural concentration of wildlife, placing them in unnatural situation during a time of year that's not normal for them. When it's easy to find a pile of food in August, September, and October, whitetails in particular gather to eat it – a hauled out wheat field, silage pile, or big bait pile. They don't have to; it's their basic survival - the need to conserve energy and body resources year-around. In the winter congregating for species such as white-tailed deer IS survival. The ability for a managing agency to establish regulations restricting or eliminating baiting as a means to protect against contagious diseases is proven science.

I highly recommend learning the facts regarding CWD by going the website, ([cwa-info.org](http://cwa-info.org)). Just clicking the link "CWD: The Basics" is an "oh wow" educational opportunity. From a writer's perspective, it's a good read – done in layman's terms so it's not complex scientific lingo. Sadly, when I looked at it last week, North Dakota's report on its most recent number of confirmed cases was one of the headlines– along with a new CWD elk unit in western Wyoming.

**North Dakota's hunting heritage is at a major crossroads. My hope is that we as North Dakotans can do more to protect our wildlife, providing opportunities for everyone to treasure the valuable intrinsic, economic, and environmental resource it is. Let's not do less by tying the hands of the agency charged with managing those resources for the populous of an entire state.**

**The potential exists, not just for CWD, but for other diseases to do more than kill off some deer. We don't know if CWD will morph into something transmittable to humans, pets, or domestic livestock. We don't know what other unforeseen wildlife diseases will be identified or their ramifications . By restricting an agency's ability to conduct valid disease management strategies, SB 2137 makes it OK to take that chance. North Dakota citizens and its wildlife deserves better.**

Testimony before the Legislature  
3/7/25

Good morning. My name is Bill Mitzel. I've been involved with our outdoors for nearly 60 years, as a writer, radio broadcaster and as publisher/editor of Dakota Country magazine for 46 years.

I realized long ago that our natural resources, especially our wildlife, were always the underdogs. They have to constantly survive the elements, they have to fight predators, and they have to fight us.

I find this particularly interesting because we here in North Dakota and the Midwest enjoy some of the best natural resources in America, if not the world. Yet we often seem to lean more toward more disrespect and destruction than preservation and promotion.

Fortunately, as a concerned society, we have specialists who dedicate their lives to maintain our resources. These people do their jobs very well and were it not for these professionals and many more people in the private sector who place high value on our outdoor world, our opportunities to enjoy our great resources would be diminished. As we watch wildlife struggle with continuing loss of habitat, adverse weather and ever-present disease, including a relatively new one -- chronic waste disease, we should be highly concerned with taking care of what we have. That includes, in this case, baiting.

In our quest to conquer the outdoor world, we seem to always be looking for easier ways to catch fish, kill wild game, much of the time with disregard for the real value of the resource. I sometimes think that if there were no rules in the outdoor world and no dedicated people to manage it, we probably wouldn't have much left.

With today's technology involving our outdoor legacy, there are also responsibilities. The line between legal and ethical is often gray. In this case, it's important to let those highly qualified to deal with the problem of CWD. It's the right thing to do. Ethics aren't regulated, they're voluntary.

Baiting deer is presently illegal in 36 states, including Montana, Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota and provinces in Canada -- mostly because of CWD, but also because of a long-standing unwritten outdoor rule -- fair chase.

We aren't allowed to dump 5-gallon buckets of store-bought shrimp into a rocky point on Lake Sakakawea to attract walleyes. We aren't allowed to dump corn and other feed piles into sheet water in cornfields to attract waterfowl. Why are we targeting deer?

We guard our property rights deeply here in the Dakotas and the Midwest. But it also comes with responsibility to protect and respect the resource. It's unfortunate that has to be regulated, since many of us won't adopt that practice on our own. It seems like when technology isn't enough, we've always got a pile of corn.

We need to trust those in charge of managing our wildlife to do the right thing. It's not about politics or private property rights. It's about maintaining our resources so vital to our way of life and our culture. We do have a responsibility to take care of it.

Thank you for your time today. •

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Bill Mitzel" in a cursive script. Below the name, there is a stylized, illegible signature that appears to be "Bismarck".

**Wildlife Feeding (and why it is so ethically wrong):**

March 7, 2025

The Feeding (Baiting) of Wildlife is an unnatural process to the Big Game species involved.

It is extremely disruptive (example presented below); to the land-owners and their families, friends and permissible hunters, that are trying to hunt within a square 4-5 mile radius, wherein feeding/baiting of Wildlife is taking place (in the middle of this area).

Feeding: the application of grains, hay, vegetables, fruits, nuts/seeds and minerals is a natural process to Livestock, not to Wildlife. The “Wild” in Wildlife is there to denote Big Game species that traverse, forage and navigate the land--without regard for property boundaries, and thus they are not to be drawn into an area on a seasonal and periodic basis—in order to be served up “meals on wheels”. The taming-down and domestic-conditioning of Wildlife should be abhorrent to any “real” Hunter.

The State governing bodies are commonly referred to as “Game and Fish”; we all do “hunting” for Game and “fishing” for Fish, we don’t get to fish (nor do we want to) in a Fish Hatchery, and therefore, don’t need (nor do we desire) to hunt in a “Feed Factory”.

So called “hunting” in, on, and around a feeding (baiting) area is not hunting, it’s just killing. Hunters come to hunt the Dakota’s, especially from East of Bismarck, because of our wide-open spaces and the opportunity to see as far as you can. We pride ourselves on “spot and stalking” and usually a lot of “walking and glassing”. We don’t need to utilize a tree-stand, such as is necessary for a heavily forested area, and God-forbid, we don’t need to start hunting with a blind or stand over a feeding/baiting area.

Down on the ND/SD State Line we are living with such an area; with 20 sections of Big Game affected, wherein our neighbor is feeding/baiting during the late-fall hunting period. After over a dozen years of this continued process, they have gotten very good at it: the timing of periodic feedings with the first hard frosts (mid-to late October), the ramping up of periodic feedings and product feed-mix (early to mid November), and then a regular daily feed application (laced with distiller’s grain-referred to as “deer cocaine”) to the end of November and into December. This process: starts with “enticing in”: the does from the surrounding area (4-5 miles in each direction) by late October, and by mid-November with the advent of “Rut”, the bucks are looking around and wondering where the girls went, and in no time all the deer from 20 sections are concentrated on his Ranch/Farm. So, when the dinner bell rings (main feeding application at dusk), there are nearly 300 deer and nearly 100 elk dining within an 80-acre area (elk first and deer second). Many of the bucks used to wander back to the 20-section area to bed-down during the day, but by combining morning/night feeding and special product feed, the deer/elk don’t wander off his property during the day, thus they are being “feed-held” till the lethal gun season is over.

These actions allowed for the desired result; as now, only a few bucks are taken (killed) outside of his property. This situation allows him to retain all the bucks (especially the big bucks) for his own archery hunting (ground blind) program in mid-December, and is shared with a few select (mostly out-of-state hunters after the ND and SD Rifle Seasons end).

The Residents/Big Game Hunters in North Dakota should not want to see this situation become replicated in other areas. The hunting-affect to the neighbors, of which I can provide at least 6 large rancher/farmer neighbors willing to vouch for this letter, has been nothing short of devastating. We are talking about a profound change; where there was 10-20 deer in each adjacent section, there are now none; maybe one or two, and/or maybe a small buck, and elk only passing through. The only bucks shot in the last couple of years by the neighbors; was due to larger bucks escorting does out of the feeding area during the Rut, and trying to hide them on neighbor's land.

The Ranchers/Farmers in the area are at their wits-end over this situation. Their families/and friends have been hunting (successfully) on their own property for 5-6 generations, You want to talk about something "personal" this is it, and indirectly a terrible violation of "property rights" We need at least an "Administrative Rule" similar to SD to help combat this situation, otherwise this could lead to some form of Civil breakdown; why would hunters come out to Bowman County and spend their money and/or buy a license. If the deer are being "sucked out" on a timetable, why wouldn't hunters take it upon themselves to hunt and kill bucks by any means possible--prior to (and after) Rifle Season.

Sincerely, Dave Stearns (and Stearns Ranches), Bowman Co and Harding Co Rancher,  
Bowman HS and UND Grad, Retired CA/OR—CEO and MN/CA--CPA

SD Administrative Rule:

**Methods prohibited.** A person may not establish, utilize, or maintain a bait station from August 1 through February 1 and from March 15 through May 31 to attract any big game animal, including wild turkey

A bait station is a location where grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, hay, minerals, or any other natural food materials, commercial products containing natural food materials, or by-products of food materials are placed or maintained as an attractant to big game animals for the purpose of hunting.

**From:** [Anderson, Dick D.](#)  
**To:** [Randazzo, Addison - HTechClerk3 - HEDU - HNAT](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: SB2137  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 4, 2025 10:23:41 AM

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**From:** Carter Medalen <carmedal67@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 4, 2025 12:08:29 AM  
**To:** Anderson, Dick D. <dickanderson@ndlegis.gov>  
**Subject:** SB2137

You don't often get email from carmedal67@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Mr. Anderson,

I am emailing you in support of a bill to either restrict or ban baiting. My preference would be to ban baiting for the sake of preserving the resource. Baiting does not initiate CWD as there are places that have had a long history of baiting and to date have no CWD, but once CWD is in an area, baiting propagates the problem. My analogy is this, if you go into a restaurant where someone is sick, there is a possibility that you can get sick as well, but if you go in a restaurant and eat off of the same plate as the person that is sick there is a much higher possibility of getting sick. Baiting artificially congregates deer. If deer are congregated in an area and more prions are deposited in that area, are not the deer congregated there more likely to become infected. The manner in which deer feed off of a bait pile is significantly different than how they forage in the wild as well as how they forage in a food plot. Deer/big game are not meant to eat out of the same trough and there are benefits to having deer spread out. How careful are landowners about the screenings or the bait they purchase and put out, are we potentially going to introduce the next noxious weed problem to ND? I will remind you that palmer amaranth was brought into NE in CRP seed and into Michigan by cottonseed meal used in dairy feed and the palmer amaranth seed went through the dairy cattle and the manure was spread on fields and now they fight palmer amaranth in their crop fields. What guardrails are in place to prevent something like that in ND, whether it is farm fields or range land? I question the testing that is taking place in ND from this standpoint, we are testing deer that have been harvested. How many hunters are shooting a sick deer when out hunting? More than likely if they see a deer that does not look well they are not shooting it, so we are testing animals that are not likely to be sick on the random chance that they have CWD. My analogy of that would be if a rancher has an animal that dies and does a postmortem on the beef they sent to the butcher. The ND Game and Fish Department is tasked with managing the resource and then cannot implement decisions for the sake of managing the resource because landowners want to turn it into a landowner rights issue. Land owners own the land but they do not own the deer or the big game on their property. We have to let ND Game and Fish do their job and manage the resource and we cannot handcuff their ability by claiming landowner rights. I have hunted deer for nearly 40 years in ND and 2023 was the poorest deer numbers I have ever seen and 2024 was worse. The vast majority of the hunters I talk to in the North Central part of the state say the exact same thing, that the current deer situation is as poor as they remember. Deer numbers drastically dropping never comes down to one thing and our deer population is being affected by loss of habitat (crp put back into production and shelterbelts being taken out). We have very high coyote numbers right now and fawn recruitment is super poor due to those high coyote numbers. We have had two relatively easy

winters and the winter of 22-23 started with a lot of snow but was not by any means what I would call a horrible winter but we are losing adult deer and without a doubt the last two winters should not have killed adult deer. Coyotes can take down sick deer but very seldomly will kill adult deer. So why are our adult deer numbers falling off? Any adult deer carcasses that I find dead on my family's property, I hope to have tested as I want to know if we are up against CWD. I will also add that not every landowner wants baiting to be legal. Too often the pro baiting crowd wants the public to believe that every landowner wants baiting to be legal and that is not correct. Baiting creates a lot of turf wars, land with great cover next to land that does not hold a lot of deer due to lack of cover and a bait pile is put in across the fence to draw deer away from the land that has the habitat and hard feelings are created.

If baiting is allowed there needs to be restrictions of some kind. Limit the amount of feed that can be put out on a daily basis. There needs to be setbacks whereas landowners cannot bait across the fence from each other. Hunters that are for baiting seem to have a notion that we should be allowed to keep baiting until there is a problem. I would liken it to a smoker who says that he is going to keep smoking until he has a bad cough. At that point it may be entirely too late. I believe we are at a point where we have a problem in ND and by not managing correctly it will only become a larger problem?

The last point I will try to make is this. We are a conservative state and we are taking a very liberal approach to this issue. To me conservatives err on the side of caution and hunters who want to bait are throwing caution to the wind. I have a soon to be 13 year old daughter who enjoys deer hunting and now with numbers being as poor as I can remember, she will not have the opportunities that I have had. I do not bait and initially did not care if people chose to bait but I now see it as one more issue having a detrimental effect on the ND deer population. I am thrilled to see Elk numbers rising in the state of ND. If CWD continues to become more prevalent, what effect will it have on our state's elk population? Can we guarantee that it will not affect our state's livestock? If we enjoy hunting don't we want to see our kids have the opportunities we have had as well as the improved opportunities with our ND elk population growing? Thank you!

Respectfully,

Carter Medalen  
Resident of Rugby, ND

## 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

### Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2137

3/20/2025

Relating to the use of supplemental feed for hunting; and providing an expiration date.
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2:42 p.m. Chairman Porter opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Porter, Vice Chairman Anderson, Vice Chair Novak,  
Representatives: Dockter, Hagert, Headland, Heinert, Johnson, Marschall, Olson, Ruby,  
Conmy, Foss

#### **Discussion Topics:**

- Amendment

2:44 p.m. Representative Anderson explains amendment 25.0097.02005 testimony #45385.

3:00 p.m. Chairman Porter closed the hearing.

*Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk by Risa Berube*

25.0097.02005  
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council  
staff for Representative D. Anderson  
March 20, 2025

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FIRST ENGROSSMENT

### ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2137

Introduced by

Senators Boehm, Thomas, Patten

Representatives Koppelman, Novak, Tveit

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 20.1-05 of the North Dakota  
2 Century Code, relating to the use of supplemental feed for hunting; and to provide an expiration  
3 date.

#### 4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

5 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 20.1-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is created  
6 and enacted as follows:

7 **Hunting big game animals using supplemental feed**~~not prohibited or restricted.~~

8 1. A person may not provide supplemental feed for the purpose of baiting or feeding big  
9 game animals except during the period from August first to January tenth.

10 2. Supplemental feed provided to big game animals may not:

11 a. Exceed fifty gallons [189.27 liters] capacity in a single hunting location.

12 b. Be placed within two hundred fifty feet [76.20 meters] of any property line outside  
13 the boundaries of an incorporated city, unless permitted by the adjacent  
14 landowner with written permission.

15 3. The department may not adopt a rule or implement a policy prohibiting or restricting  
16 the use of supplemental feed on private property for hunting a big game animal.

17 **SECTION 2. EXPIRATION DATE.** This Act is effective through July 31, 2029, and after that  
18 date is ineffective.

## 2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

### Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Coteau AB Room, State Capitol

SB 2137

4/3/2025

Relating to the use of supplemental feed for hunting; and to provide an expiration date.
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9:26 a.m. Chairman Porter called the hearing to order.

Members Present: Chairman Porter, Vice Chairman Anderson, Vice Chair Novak,  
Representatives: Dockter, Hagert, Headland, Heinert, Johnson, Marschall, Olson, Ruby,  
Conmy, Foss

#### Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

9:44 a.m. Vice Chair Anderson moved to adopt amendment 25.0097.02008 #44608

9:44 a.m. Representative Dockter seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Dick Anderson	Y
Representative Anna Novak	N
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative Jason Dockter	Y
Representative Austin Foss	Y
Representative Jared c. Hagert	Y
Representative Craig Headland	N
Representative Pat D. Heinert	AB
Representative Jorin Johnson	N
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Jeremy L. Olson	N
Representative Matthew Ruby	N

Motion carried: 7-5-1

9:45 a.m. Vice Chair Anderson moved a Do Pass as Amended.

9:45 a.m. Representative Dockter seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Dick Anderson	Y
Representative Anna Novak	Y
Representative Liz Conmy	Y
Representative Jason Dockter	Y

Representative Austin Foss	N
Representative Jared c. Hagert	Y
Representative Craig Headland	N
Representative Pat D. Heinert	AB
Representative Jorin Johnson	N
Representative Andrew Marschall	Y
Representative Jeremy L. Olson	Y
Representative Matthew Ruby	N

Motion carried: 8-4-1

Bill carrier: Vice Chair Anderson

9:47 a.m. Chairman Porter adjourned the meeting

*Leah Kuball, Committee Clerk*

25.0097.02008  
Title.03000

Prepared by the Legislative Council  
staff for Representative Porter  
March 31, 2025

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO  
FIRST ENGROSSMENT**

VC 4/3/25  
1 of 1

**ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2137**

Introduced by

Senators Boehm, Thomas, Patten

Representatives Koppelman, Novak, Tveit

- 1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact a new section to chapter 20.1-05 of the North Dakota  
2 Century Code, relating to the use of supplemental feed for hunting; to provide for a legislative  
3 management report; and to provide an expiration date.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

- 5 **SECTION 1.** A new section to chapter 20.1-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is created  
6 and enacted as follows:

7 **Hunting big game animals using supplemental feed ~~not prohibited or restricted~~ -**  
8 **Report to legislative management.**

- 9 1. The department may not adopt a rule or implement a policy prohibiting or restricting  
10 the use of supplemental feed on private property for hunting a big game animal.  
11 2. Supplemental feed provided to big game animals may not:  
12 a. Exceed fifty gallons [189.27 liters] capacity in a single hunting location.  
13 b. Be placed within fifty feet [15.24 meters] of any property used for animal  
14 agriculture.  
15 3. The department shall conduct chronic wasting disease surveillance and testing.  
16 4. The department shall provide a report to the legislative management before  
17 December 31, 2028, regarding an update on the surveillance and testing protocols  
18 and procedures for chronic wasting disease in the state.

- 19 **SECTION 2. EXPIRATION DATE.** This Act is effective through July 31, 2029, and after that  
20 date is ineffective.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE  
ENGROSSED SB 2137**

**Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Rep. Porter, Chairman)** recommends **AMENDMENTS (25.0097.02008)** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (8 YEAS, 4 NAYS, 1 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed SB 2137 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

25.0097.02008  
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council  
staff for Representative Porter  
March 31, 2025

Sixty-ninth  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

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