



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 18 April 2018
To: Agriculture Committee
From: Kip Adams, Director of Conservation
Re: House Bill 5770

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) I am writing to state our support for House Bill 5770 which would require a second perimeter fence around privately owned cervid facilities. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA has over 60,000 members nationwide and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

Nearly every deer hunter has heard of chronic wasting disease (CWD), and unfortunately more are being directly impacted by it each year. Chronic Wasting Disease is an always fatal disease found in most deer species, including elk, moose, mule and white-tailed deer, and CWD has now been identified in 25 U.S. states, three Canadian provinces, Korea (from an elk imported from Canada in 1997), Finland and Norway. Contagions spread through urine, feces, saliva, blood, deer parts, and especially via live deer. Importantly, there is no vaccine or cure.

Since CWD can unknowingly be moved among captive facilities, live deer can carry and spread the disease without showing outward signs of infection, and captive deer escape on an all-too-frequent basis. For example, the Wisconsin DNR reported in March 2003 that 671 deer had escaped from game farms, including 436 that were never found. The DNR also estimated that captive deer had escaped from one third of the state's 550 deer farms over the lifetime of the operations. In 2004, Michigan documented 456 previously unreported escapes. Between 2006 and 2009 another 595 escapes were reported in Wisconsin, including 266 whitetails, 78 elk, and 251 exotics. We realize the owners of these animals have a vested interest in preventing escapes. However, people leave gates open, vandals cut fences, and trees fall on fences. Whatever the reason, captive deer routinely escape so we urge you to support this important legislation. Thank you for your commitment to Michigan's natural resources, and please contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Respectfully,

Kip Adams
Director of Conservation