



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 24 September 2019
To: The Honorable State Senator from Wisconsin
From: Jacob Pries, Policy Intern
Re: Co-sponsorship of LRB 0293, LRB 4072, and LRB 3300

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), we respectfully request your co-sponsorship of LRB 0293, LRB 4072, and LRB 3300. The “Healthy Herd, Healthy Hunt” legislative package will address the growing epidemic of chronic wasting disease (CWD) that is affecting the future of white-tailed deer, and the time-honored tradition of white-tailed deer hunting that is so deeply engrained in the history of your state by providing the necessary tools to address the issue. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. Founded in 1988, the QDMA has over 60,000 members nationwide and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

CWD is nothing short of an epidemic within the wildlife community and Wisconsin stands on the precipice of an extremely important time to act on this issue to keep the state’s successful hunting industry thriving. CWD is an always fatal disease found in all native North American cervids (members of the deer family) including elk, moose, mule and white-tailed deer, and it has now been identified in 26 U.S. states, three Canadian provinces, Korea, Finland and Norway. Contagions spread through urine, feces, saliva, blood, deer parts, and especially via live animals. Importantly, there is no vaccine, no cure and no practical live animal test. Currently, 26 states prohibit importation of live cervids from states or portions thereof that are endemic for CWD, and 15 states have banned importation regardless of origin or CWD status to attempt to address this growing issue.

Whitetails are the most popular big game animal in the U.S., and whitetail hunters are the foundation of the nearly \$67 billion hunting industry. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, approximately three of every four hunters pursue whitetails, and in Wisconsin, according to the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation, over 700,000 hunters help contribute \$4.03 billion annually to the state’s economy. Additionally, these hunters help support an industry that directly maintains 55,722 jobs. With Wisconsin ranking in the top ten in total sportsmen and women and top three in hunting license revenue, it is clear that the outdoor tradition runs deep in the hearts of many Wisconsinites. The citizens, the wildlife and the economic well-being of your state depend on your leadership surrounding this issue.

With legislators taking the lead to address the problems surrounding CWD, we can begin to come together and solve the problems this disease brings. We respectfully request that you build on the legacy left by those who have laid the foundation for conservation in this country and co-sponsor these bills to ensure that the next generation is as fortunate as we have been to garner those indescribable outdoor experiences. Pushing for conservation and tackling CWD is not a partisan issue, it is a promise to the next generation that we will leave this place better than we found it. On behalf of the QDMA, we would like to thank you for your time, consideration, and dedicated service to the state of Wisconsin.

Respectfully,

Jacob Pries
Policy Intern (QDMA)