



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 160 • 170 Whitetail Way • Bogart, GA 30622
PHONE: 800.209.3337 • FAX: 706.353.0223 • www.QDMA.com

Date: 22 November 2019
To: MDWFP Legislative Committee
From: Jacob Pries, Policy Intern
Re: Support for HB 768 and Subsequent Measures

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA), we respectfully request your support of Mississippi House Bill 768 and any subsequent measures related thereof upon the return of active legislative session. 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 Mississippi 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 a nearly \$67 billion hunting industry. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, approximately three of every four hunters pursue whitetails and according to the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, hunters help contribute \$2.2 billion annually to the state's economy while supporting 33,584 jobs. CWD has the potential to wipe out a substantial portion of this economic activity if not addressed. The citizens, the wildlife and the economic well-being of your state depend on your leadership surrounding this issue. Proactivity on this issue is critical. We cannot stress enough the importance of quickly moving legislation through the state legislature to address this major threat to conservation, hunting, and the economy within your state. We must seek to avoid the stalling of legislation that has occurred over the past legislative session.

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 quickly move legislation to address CWD through the legislative process, thus ensuring that the next generation is as fortunate as we have been to witness a healthy white-tailed deer population. 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 Mississippi.

Respectfully,

Jacob Pries
Policy Intern (QDMA)