



Subject: Letter in support of HF 2814-Farmed Cervidae owner requirements modified, chronic wasting disease live-animal testing required, and money appropriated.

The Chronic Wasting Disease Action Coalition is a coalition of organizations who are working to maintain the health of Minnesota's wild cervid animals. Currently CWD is spreading across our state and poses a real and long term threat to our wild deer, elk, and moose, as well as our hunting heritage and the half billion dollar hunting economy supported by deer hunting activities.

At the present time, two state agencies have been given concurrent authority over captive cervid animals. From reviewing the recent MN DNR and BAH Report: "Concurrent Authority Regulating Farmed Whitetail Deer" it is clear that urgent action is necessary to protect the health of wild deer in Minnesota. Rates of fencing infractions witnessed by agency officials and detailed in the report are simply unacceptable. The report also highlights that nationwide, even cervid farms that meet the highest USDA standards for herd certification were still found to be spreading CWD. The report states that "most of the herds discovered to have CWD in the United States in the past 5 years have been Level 6 (highest level of certification) at the time of disease discovery."

The CWD Action Coalition supports the recommendations of the MN DNR and BAH as detailed in the concurrent authority report. These recommendations, along with the implementation of the language in HF 2814, will provide a higher level of oversight and understanding of the condition of captive herd animals in Minnesota.

Researchers in Minnesota have developed the RT-QuIC test, which can be used in an antemortem state. Up until recently, reliable methods have only been available for testing deceased animals. This test has been shown to be very reliable in detecting the presence of the disease in living cervid animals. The use of RT-QuIC to test all captive cervids in Minnesota as described in HF 2814 is a step in the right direction as we seek to fully understand the prevalence of the disease in captive cervids.

If an animal tests positive for CWD, this bill provides an action plan to stem the spread of this always fatal disease.

HF 2814 is a solid step towards getting the spread of chronic wasting disease in Minnesota under control. The members of the CWD Action Coalition support the passage of this legislation and urge members of

our state legislature to continue to work for the long term health of our wild cervid animals, hunting culture, and economy. The time for action is now and using the RT-QuIC test to determine just where CWD is present will provide important information to cervid farmers and our state agencies tasked with the oversight of these facilities.

Sincerely,

Members of the CWD Action Coalition

Minnesota Conservation Federation
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers- Minnesota Chapter
Bluffland Whitetails Association
Minnesota Chapter of the Wildlife Society
Minnesota Deer Hunters Association
Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America
Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Association
National Deer Association
National Wildlife Federation
Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters