



October 5, 2023

Commissioner Walter Rabon  
2 M.L.K. Jr Dr SE  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Commissioner Rabon,

The CWD Coalition, a group made up of timber companies and conservation non-governmental organizations, has closely reviewed the Georgia CWD Response Plan. While substantive in many areas, we recommend an enhancement to the plan. The CWD Coalition recommends the prohibition of feeding and baiting of cervids in CWD Management Zones, rather than the voluntary cessation as prescribed in Georgia's plan.

There is strong scientific consensus on banning supplemental feeding and baiting of deer in CWD Management Zones as part of a comprehensive strategy to slow or mitigate the spread of this deadly disease. Best management practices endorsed by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Boone and Crockett Club, the National Deer Association and the CWD Alliance all call for the elimination of artificially concentrating cervids around baiting/feeding stations in combatting CWD. CWD management professionals and researchers across the country strongly recommend the mandatory cessation of baiting/feeding as a strategy in CWD Management Zones.

One of the justifications for avoiding this mandate in Georgia should we discover CWD is to maintain relationships with landowners and hunters. The CWD Coalition, undersigned, represents over 23,000,000 acres of private land across the United States, with 1,043,783 acres of privately owned land in Georgia. Using a conservative estimate of 100 acres per hunter, the Coalition's footprint in GA alone directly enables hunting opportunities for an estimated 10,438 GA hunters. With all member companies offering recreational opportunities via public WMA agreements and/or recreational leasing programs, we have a vested interest in CWD policy and agree that policy decisions should follow the best available science.

To protect the resource, and to protect the future of deer hunting in Georgia, we strongly urge the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Board to exercise the responsibility granted by the Georgia General Assembly in OCGA 27-3-9(b)(3) and suspend the artificial concentration of deer through baiting and feeding in any CWD Management Zones established in the state.

Respectfully submitted,

Kit Hart, Director of Forest Planning & Environment  
PotlatchDeltic

Matt Gelston, Senior Manager  
Business Development Land Resources Atlantic Region  
Rayonier

Kip Adams, Chief Conservation Officer  
National Deer Association

Cade Warner, COO  
The Westervelt Company

Tony Schoonen, CEO  
Boone & Crockett Club

Mike Worley, CEO  
The Georgia Wildlife Federation