

Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning.

My name is Joe Solseng, from rural Grand Forks County. I am a hunter, land owner and, above all, I love our state of North Dakota.

I am here because I am concerned about this bill (HB1151) that would strip the power of the NDG&F Dept. in regulating deer hunting over bait; thereby putting our deer, elk and moose populations in jeopardy.

We have an advancing problem, not only in North Dakota, but throughout the US, where Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is spreading through our cervid herds. This disease spreads through close contact of these animals and their bodily fluids and feces. Whatever we do (all of us, not only hunters) to artificially concentrate these animals increases the risk of CWD spread. Someone must be the leader in research and damage control. This is one of the fundamental purposes of the Game and Fish Department. The decisions this department makes are evidence based and have the best interests of both the animals and the people of North Dakota in mind.

As for this disease, it is always fatal, and at this point incurable. All precautions must be taken to insure that our cervid herds stay in the best of health. Feeding and baiting, then, must be managed and eliminated as progression advances.

Last week I had a bad cold and I made the decision to stay home and heal up a bit. No hockey, no church. Heck, my wife didn't even want to be across the table when I ate meals. But I'll be okay. But what about those infected deer? First of all, they may not show any symptoms of illness and certainly don't have the mental capacity to stay separated even if they did. Unfortunately, they are spreading the disease and won't be okay in a week, a month or ever. Their future is certain death. Let's think about what could happen with no regulatory authority:

1. Eventual large scale deer die-offs. This includes elk and moose.
2. Inedible meat from infected animals, or until after testing on non-infected animals.
3. Loss of larger, more mature, animals as disease progresses.
4. Possible disease morphs to affect domestic livestock, or even humans.

I feel strongly that the North Dakota Game and Fish Department is exactly who should be making decisions regarding baiting for the state of North Dakota. They are the experts in the field.

Thank you.

Joe Solseng