
November 14, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
House of Representatives
H-204 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The Western Governors' Association (WGA) appreciates the efforts of Congressional leaders to raise awareness of, and provide funding for, research and management of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). On behalf of Western Governors, I am writing in support of expanded funding to state fish and wildlife agencies for research, testing, monitoring, prevention and management of CWD in wildlife populations.

CWD is a contagious and 100 percent fatal disease affecting deer, elk, moose, reindeer and other cervid species. The disease currently exists in at least 24 states (including several in the West), and the economic burdens of monitoring and managing CWD in wild populations falls largely on state agencies. Under the Pittman-Robertson Act, state fish and wildlife agencies derive a large portion of their funding from hunting and fishing license sales and federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment. As the disease spreads, license and hunting equipment sales may decline as a result of increased complications and concerns associated with hunting in areas where CWD is present. This creates a situation where funding to state fish and wildlife agencies responsible for fighting CWD is gradually eroded, as the costs of combating CWD continue to rise along with its incidence.

WGA commends Congressional leaders who have prioritized funding and support to state fish and wildlife agencies to help monitor, manage and contain the spread of CWD in wild cervid populations. Beyond support to state agencies on the front lines combatting CWD, funding for scientific research to better understand and manage CWD is critical. Advances in diagnostic testing – in particular the development of an effective test for live animals – will enable state wildlife managers to more rapidly detect and respond to the disease.

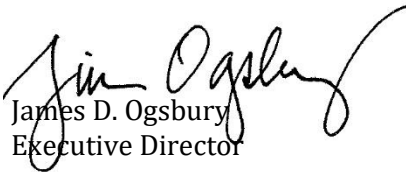
As Congress considers means of funding research on CWD, I direct your attention to the [Special Report](#) of WGA's [Biosecurity and Invasive Species Initiative](#), which highlights the importance of research in controlling wildlife diseases, including CWD. The report recommends that institutions researching wildlife diseases look for opportunities to pool funding resources and exchange information across administrative lines. Wildlife diseases such as CWD present significant threats to western resources and would benefit from the use of pooled resources and collaborative

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Charles Schumer
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
November 14, 2019
Page 2

research efforts. By pooling resources, state, federal and private researchers can decrease redundancy and increase the efficiency of research funding.

Western Governors look forward to working with you to identify and promote legislative efforts to support state wildlife management agencies in their fight against CWD and other forms of wildlife disease.

Sincerely,



James D. Ogsbury
Executive Director