
December 4, 2019

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
Committee on Environment & Public Works
United States Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment & Public Works
United States Senate
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

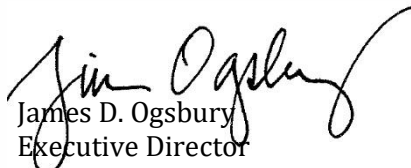
Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

Thank you for holding your December 4 hearing, "legislative hearing on a bill to create a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Chronic Wasting Disease Task Force." To inform the Committee's consideration of this important topic, I request that the Committee include the Western Governors' Association's November 14, 2019 letter to Congressional leadership on Chronic Wasting Disease in the permanent record of the hearing.

Western Governors support the efforts of the Committee to raise awareness of, and provide funding for, research and management of CWD. CWD is a contagious and 100 percent fatal disease affecting deer, elk, moose, reindeer and other cervid species. State agencies are on the front lines combating CWD, and additional funding to support state efforts to research the disease and monitor, manage and contain the spread is critical.

Thank you for your leadership on this important subject and your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,



James D. Ogsbury
Executive Director

Attachment

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.

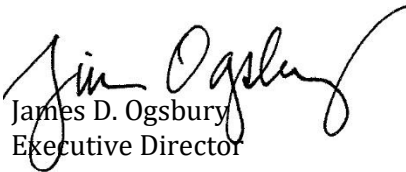
As Congress considers means of funding research on CWD, I direct your attention to the [Special Report](#) of WGA's [Biosecurity and Invasive Species Initiative](#), which highlights the importance of research in controlling wildlife diseases, including CWD. The report recommends that institutions researching 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

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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