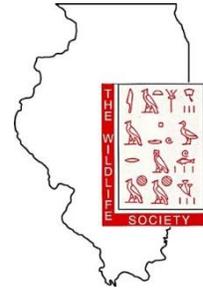


Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society

August 1, 2018

The Honorable Bruce Rauner
Governor of Illinois
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706



RE: **VETO SB2493** – “Wildlife CD-Deer Feed”

Dear Governor Rauner:

We urge you to veto SB2493 as it could result in increased risk to our state’s wildlife populations by undermining efforts to prevent the spread of diseases in our native wildlife.

SB2493 effectively eliminates a ban on feeding white-tailed deer, which was enacted after the discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in white-tailed deer in Illinois. Surrounding states such as Missouri and Wisconsin maintain feeding bans because those states understand that feeding stations facilitate disease transmission and threatened the overall health of the deer herd.

SB2493 also mandates a research study be conducted to determine if “supplemental feeding affects the risk of disease transmission in the deer population”. We are hopeful you will not allow the expenditure of Illinois funds to conduct research on a topic that has been studied many times and for which the answers are well known. I have attached a summary of one such study published earlier this year in a peer-reviewed journal implicating mineral supplements as disease reservoirs.

We understand that talks have occurred in recent weeks between the bill’s sponsor and the University of Illinois’ Veterinary School and the Prairie Research Institute to discuss implementation of the bill. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has worked for nearly two decades to fight CWD in Illinois. Enacting SB2493 into law will threaten the DNR’s efforts to limit the spread of CWD within Illinois and will possibly result in wasting all the tax dollars invested in protecting our wildlife from CWD.

Again, we urge you to veto SB2493 as it could result in increased risk of disease transmission to our state’s wildlife populations by undermining efforts to prevent the spread of diseases in our native wildlife.

The Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society is an organization of over 100 wildlife professionals dedicated to excellence in wildlife conservation, animal health, and human health through science, research, and education. We represent biologists, managers, educators, technicians, and others who actively work to study, manage, and conserve wildlife and their habitats in Illinois. We have a shared commitment to animal and human health and to the conservation of natural resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Scott Beckerman'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long horizontal line.

Scott Beckerman
President

copy: Keith Norris, Director of Wildlife Policy and Programs, The Wildlife Society

Members of the Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society who serve as professional staff of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources are recommended to recuse themselves from participating in this manner.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Mineral licks as environmental reservoirs of chronic wasting disease prions

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within the paper and its Supporting Information files.

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Abstract

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal neurodegenerative disease of deer, elk, moose, and reindeer (cervids) caused by misfolded prion proteins. The disease has been reported across North America and recently discovered in northern Europe. Transmission of CWD in wild cervid populations can occur through environmental routes, but limited ability to detect prions in environmental samples has prevented the identification of potential transmission “hot spots”. We establish widespread CWD prion contamination of mineral licks used by free-ranging cervids in an enzootic area in Wisconsin, USA. We show **mineral licks can serve as reservoirs of CWD prions and thus facilitate disease transmission. Furthermore, mineral licks attract livestock and other wildlife that also obtain mineral nutrients via soil and water consumption. Exposure to CWD prions at mineral licks provides potential for cross-species transmission to wildlife, domestic animals, and humans.** Managing deer use of mineral licks warrants further consideration to help control outbreaks of CWD.

Introduction

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) was first observed in 1967 [1] and long thought to be a disease of minor scientific curiosity affecting mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and confined to the Rocky Mountains in northern Colorado and southern Wyoming, USA. Subsequently the disease was found in white-tailed deer (*O. virginianus*) and elk (*Cervus canadensis*). The geographic range of CWD has also expanded dramatically since 2000 [2] and is now present in 25 U.S. states, two Canadian provinces (http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/disease_information/chronic_wasting_disease/index.jsp), South Korea, Norway [3], and Finland (https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/first_case_in_finland_elk_dies_due_to_chronic_wasting_disease/10108115) and has been found in moose (*Alces alces*) and reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*) [2,4]. In addition, CWD prevalence has continued to increase with some free-ranging herds