



July 1, 2021

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Mr. Romey Swanson
Dr. Don Steinbach
Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society
d-steinbach@tamu.edu

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Carter P. Smith
Executive Director

Dear Mr. Swanson and Dr. Steinbach:

Thank you for your letter dated June 21, 2021, regarding Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and our hunting heritage in Texas. I appreciate you taking the time to share your perspective and reflections on this critically important topic.

As you know well, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission (Commission) and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) staff take very seriously our responsibility to manage this treasured public resource and the hunting heritage. TPWD and Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) will continue to work together to investigate the extent and prevalence of CWD, and to conduct the necessary epidemiological studies in order to identify where the disease exists and establish best management practices to protect native cervid populations in Texas. Please rest assured that as we continue to navigate this very concerning issue, we will engage the many stakeholders and hear their perspectives, using science as the foundation to develop a comprehensive rule package to arrest the spread of this insidious disease.

TPWD and the Commission appreciate and value your continued support in our efforts. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Wildlife Division Director Mr. John Silovsky by email at john.silovsky@tpwd.texas.gov or by phone at (512) 389-8012. Thank you again, Mr. Swanson and Dr. Steinbach, for taking the time to reach out personally on a topic of such interest to both of us.

Respectfully,

Arch H. "Beaver" Aplin, III
Chairman

ABA:bdk

cc: TPW Commission
Mr. Carter Smith
Mr. Clayton Wolf
Mr. John Silovsky



Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society

"Excellence in Wildlife Stewardship Through Science and Education."

June 21, 2021

The Honorable Arch H. Aplin, III
Chairman, Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, Texas 78744

Dear Chairman Aplin,

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exec. Dir.	NAME Wildlife
<input type="checkbox"/> C.O.O.	DATE 6/29/2021
<input type="checkbox"/> Div. Dir.	CONTROL NUMBER 096
Chairman Aplin sig Texas Parks Commission	SUSPENSE DATE 7/6/21

OF 0100-2A-298

With over 800 professional and student members, The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society is the nation's largest chapter, devoted to science-based wildlife management in Texas. We are writing to you and the Commission to express our deep concern over the recent discovery of CWD in captive deer herds, and the unintended consequences of transporting deer that are able to spread this insidious disease. We urge you to take immediate action to prohibit transport of live deer in the state until more is known of the extent and prevalence of CWD, the origins of the disease, and all necessary epidemiological studies have been conducted.

Since 2002, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has worked tirelessly to first, prevent CWD from occurring in the state, and now, to slow the spread of the disease by implementing mandatory check stations, carcass restrictions, a prohibition of interstate shipment of deer, and extensive rules to minimize the inadvertent transfer of CWD through intrastate live deer shipments. In spite of these efforts, CWD has continued its progression, and now we face a dire future that requires bold steps to prevent further artificial spread. We are concerned because CWD can cause population declines in both mule deer¹ and white-tailed deer², has the potential to cause similar declines in Texas deer herds³, and may make popular management techniques untenable, especially baiting⁴, supplemental feeding⁴, and managing for high deer densities and mature bucks⁵. Furthermore, the public/private partnership we enjoy in our great state is under threat from those within the deer breeding industry that wish to privatize a public resource for financial gain, based on inches of antler growth that satisfies a very narrow segment of the hunting public. The risk that this activity represents simply does not outweigh the health of the state's four million wild deer and multi-million dollar recreational engine that is deer hunting in Texas. The department has attempted to solve an adaptive challenge (preventing the spread of CWD) with a technological solution (deer breeder rules), which we believe is not possible. Therefore, the only option is to prohibit the transport of live deer in the state.

Additionally, we are aware that a sizeable portion of the Wildlife and Law Enforcement division's budgets have necessarily been spent each year to monitor deer breeding activities, enforce permit requirements and respond to CWD outbreaks. It is disconcerting that limited financial resources, provided

by hunters, are being spent to support such a small segment of the hunting economy in Texas, with essentially no benefit to the average deer hunter. We implore you to re-evaluate the cost of these activities and ensure that they are covered 100% by deer breeder permit fees.

In closing, we express our strong support for TPWD, and their attempts to contain this disease over the years. It is clear however, that there now needs to be a bolder decision to prohibit the transport of live deer, under the authority of an emergency rule, until more is known about CWD detection and containment.

The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society is ready to assist the department in any way possible as you deal expeditiously and effectively with this CWD outbreak.

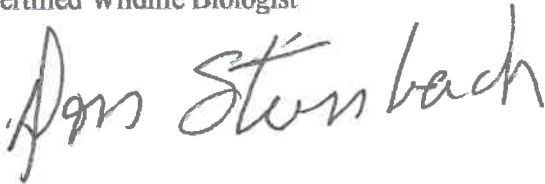
Respectfully,



Romey Swanson

President, Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society

Certified Wildlife Biologist



Don Steinbach. Ph.D.

Executive Director, Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society

CC: The Honorable Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas
The Honorable Dan Patrick, Lieutenant Governor of Texas
The Honorable Dade Phelan, Speaker – Texas House of Representatives
The Honorable Ken King, Chair – House Culture, Recreation & Tourism Committee
The Honorable Tracy King, Chair – House Agriculture & Livestock Committee
The Honorable Charles Perry, Chair – Senate Agriculture, Water & Rural Affairs Committee
The Honorable James E. Abell, TPW Commissioner
The Honorable Oliver J. Bell, TPW Commissioner
The Honorable Paul L. Foster, TPW Commissioner
The Honorable Anna B. Gallo, TPW Commissioner
The Honorable Jeffery D. Hildebrand, TPW Commissioner

The Honorable Robert L. "Bobby" Patton, Jr., TPW Commissioner
The Honorable Travis B. "Blake" Rowling, TPW Commissioner
The Honorable Richard "Dick" Scott, TPW Commissioner
The Honorable Lee M. Bass, Chairman-Emeritus – TPW Commission
The Honorable T. Dan Friedkin, Chairman-Emeritus – TPW Commission
The Honorable Coleman Locke, Chair - TAHC Commission
The Honorable Jim Eggleston, TAHC Commissioner
The Honorable Jimmie Ruth Evans, TAHC Commissioner
The Honorable Melanie Johnson, TAHC Commissioner
The Honorable Kenneth "Ken" Jordan, TAHC Commissioner
The Honorable Barret J. Klein, TAHC Commissioner
The Honorable Wendee C. Langdon, TAHC Commissioner
The Honorable Joe Leathers, TAHC Commissioner
The Honorable Thomas "Tommy" Oates, TAHC Commissioner
The Honorable Joseph "Joe" Osterkamp, TAHC
The Honorable Keith M. Staggs, TAHC Commissioner
The Honorable Leo Vermedahl, TAHC Commissioner
The Honorable Michael L. Vickers, TAHC Commissioner
The Honorable Jimmie Ruth Evans, Chair, TPWD Private Lands Advisory Committee

Mr. Carter Smith, TPWD Executive Director
Dr. Andy Schwartz, DVM, TAHC Executive Director

¹DeVivo M. T., D. R. Edmunds, M. J. Kauffman, B. A. Schumaker, J. Binfet, T. J. Kreeger, B. J. Richards, H. M. Schatzl, and T. E. Cornish. 2017. Endemic chronic wasting disease causes mule deer population decline in Wyoming. *PLoS ONE* 12(10): e0186512. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0186512>

²Edmunds D. R., M. J. Kauffman, B. A. Schumaker, F. G. Lindzey, W. E. Cook, T. J. Kreeger, R. G. Googan, and T. E. Cornish. (2016) Chronic Wasting Disease Drives Population Decline of White-Tailed Deer. *PLoS ONE* 11(8): e0161127. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0161127>

³Foley A. M., D. G. Hewitt, C. A. DeYoung, R. W. DeYoung, and M. J. Schnupp. 2016. Modeled Impacts of Chronic Wasting Disease on White-Tailed Deer in a Semi-Arid Environment. *PLoS ONE* 11(10): e0163592

⁴Sorensen, A., F. M. van Beest, and R. K. Brook. 2014. Impacts of wildlife baiting and supplemental

feeding on infectious disease transmission risk: A synthesis of knowledge. *Preventive Veterinary Medicine*. 113:356–363.

⁵Miller, M. W., J. P. Runge, A. A. Holland, and M. D. Eckert. 2020. Hunting pressure modulates prion infection risk in mule deer herds. *Journal of Wildlife Disease* 56:781–790.

Dee Halliburton

From: Donny Steinbach <d-steinbach@tamu.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, June 22, 2021 3:33 PM
To: Dee Halliburton
Subject: Re: CWD letter from Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society

ALERT: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links in unknown or unexpected emails.

It was prepared before the emergency rules were released
I understand that several of our concerns were addressed by those rules
Thanks helping

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 22, 2021, at 2:15 PM, Dee Halliburton <Dee.Halliburton@tpwd.texas.gov> wrote:

Hello Mr. Steinbach,

I just need a little clarification on the letter. Was this prepared before our Emergency Rule or after our Emergency Rule that just went out today.

Please advise.

Thank you.

Dee

Dee Halliburton | Executive Assistant | Manager

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

4200 Smith School Road

Austin, Texas 78744

512-389-4802 Phone | 512-389-4814 Fax

<image001.gif>

From: Don Steinbach <d-steinbach@tamu.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, June 22, 2021 1:56 PM
To: Arch.aplin@tpwd.texas.gov
Cc: James Abell (Comm'r) <James.Abell@tpwd.texas.gov>; Oliver Bell (Comm'r) <Oliver.Bell@tpwd.texas.gov>; Paul L. Foster (Comm'r) <Paul.Foster@tpwd.texas.gov>; Anna.Gallo@tpwd.texas.gov; Jeffery Hildebrand (Comm'r) <Jeffery.Hildebrand@tpwd.texas.gov>; Robert.Patton@tpwd.texas.gov; Travis.Rowling@tpwd.texas.gov; Richard.Scott@tpwd.texas.gov; Lee Bass (Comm'r) <Lee.Bass@tpwd.texas.gov>; Dan Friedkin (Comm'r) <Dan.Friedkin@tpwd.texas.gov>; Coleman.Locke@tahc.texas.gov; Jim.Eggleston@tahc.texas.gov; Jimmie.Evans@tahc.texas.gov;

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Tracy.king@house.texas.gov; Charles.perry@senate.texas.gov; Fisher.Reynolds@gov.texas.gov
Subject: CWD letter from Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society

ALERT: This email came from an external source. Do not open attachments or click on links in unknown or unexpected emails.

Please find attached letter from The Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society expressing our concerns about the outbreak of Chronic Wasting Disease in Texas.