

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 16, 2018

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Zinke and Secretary Perdue:

Thank you for your efforts to identify and contain chronic wasting disease (CWD). As part of your ongoing efforts, we ask that you conduct an extensive examination of this dangerous disease.

CWD is a contagious neurological disorder that affects deer, elk, and other cervids, and it already poses a serious threat to deer populations. CWD has steadily spread since its initial discovery in a mule deer herd at a Colorado research facility in the late 1960s. It has now been identified in as many as 25 states, as well as three Canadian provinces.

The challenge of addressing CWD is twofold. First, no live test for CWD exists, so the detection and confirmation of the disease is only possible post-mortem when the disease has already spread. The only practicable means of control in this situation is to conduct a major culling of the infected population. Second, without a live test, there is no way to know whether the interstate transportation of deer and other cervids will bring CWD to new areas.

Meanwhile, the frequency of CWD detection has grown in infected areas, and new positive tests are being reported as deer hunting seasons begin around the country. The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks has confirmed two more cases of CWD in the past month. Minnesota's Board of Animal Health announced this past week that a captive deer facility once again tested positive for CWD. And in Wisconsin, the percentage of deer testing positive for CWD has increased tenfold from 2005 (0.72%) to 2016 (7.3%), with some areas of the state reporting between 30-50% prevalence levels.

This level of loss is already threatening deer and elk hunting, which are extremely popular in the United States. More than 9 million Americans participate in these activities annually, which are estimated to contribute more than \$20 billion in economic activity, tax revenues, and license sales. Hunting is also a key element of science-based wildlife conservation.

We suggest that your two departments assign senior staff to expand the examination of CWD, particularly as an issue for deliberation with the Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation Council (HSSCC). The HSSCC is co-chartered by U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S.

Department of the Interior under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. It is an ideal venue to assess current efforts at the Department of the Interior with respect to surveillance mapping and at the Department of Agriculture for developing standards for interstate transport of deer and elk. We believe your agency experts, representatives from states and tribes, and the HSSCC can identify needs for national policy on this matter.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator



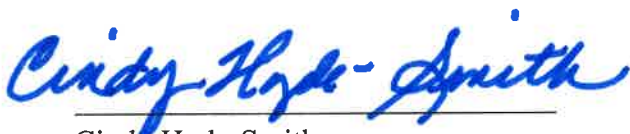
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



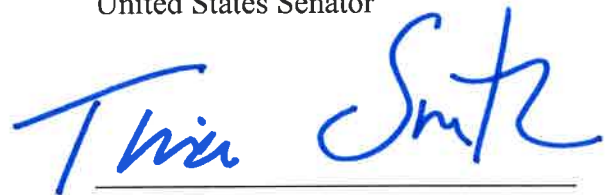
Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



John Thune
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John Hoeven". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

John Hoeven
United States Senator