



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

The voice of Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources since 1940.

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Resolution No. 5, 2025

SUBJECT: Support for Increased Surveillance and Response to Contain the Spread of Chronic Wasting Disease in Louisiana

WHEREAS, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a neurodegenerative disease of deer and other cervids that is infectious, always fatal, and for which there is currently no known cure; and

WHEREAS, since its discovery in the 1960s, CWD has been found in wild cervids in 36 states and four Canadian provinces and in captive cervid facilities in 22 states and three provinces.

WHEREAS, CWD was first found in Louisiana in the wild deer herd in 2022 and in captive cervid pens in 2024; and

WHEREAS, CWD is one of a family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), including bovine spongiform encephalopathy ("Mad Cow Disease"), which are caused by mutated proteins called prions that are spread by deer-to-deer contact, by contact with urine, feces, saliva, and body parts of infected deer, or by contact with infected soils; and

WHEREAS, captive cervid facilities and deer pens present additional risks for spread of CWD to wild deer populations through contact at fence lines, escapes from fence damage after storms, and contamination of soils near these facilities; and

WHEREAS, as of 2019, there are at least 292 permitted captive deer operations in Louisiana, containing 10,000 animals; and

WHEREAS, the CWD positive cases discovered in November 2024 have already been linked to at least three other captive deer facilities in the state; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry's (LDAF) interest in supporting the economic growth of the captive cervid industry seems to discourage the agency from aggressively and transparently pursuing the containment of CWD; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has taken action to contain the spread of CWD in wild cervids but has faced challenges to its authority from LDAF and the captive cervid industry; and

WHEREAS, deer hunting activities have a huge retail economic impact, as well as a positive impact on hunting property values, both of which would be diminished if CWD continues to spread in Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) urges the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry to implement aggressive surveillance, best practices for testing, and transparent public reporting about past, present, and future cases of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in the captive cervid locations and populations that they regulate, and provide better coordination with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in response and mitigation measures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LWF urges the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to fully exercise their authority to respond to CWD in cervid populations through the designation of control areas, movement bans, and restrictions on baiting and other high-risk practices in areas impacted by positive cases from captive cervid facilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LWF urges the Louisiana Legislature to consider and pass, and the Governor to sign into law, legislation that may be required to provide for additional necessary measures to contain the spread of CWD in captive and wild cervid populations as well as greater coordination between Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in addressing containment of CWD.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in Convention Assembled on March 15, 2025 in Woodworth, Louisiana.