

PRESS RELEASE

Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association

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Groups Meet with Governor's Office over Deer Baiting and Feeding Bill

The Wisconsin Deer Hunters Association (WDHA) along with other conservation and agriculture groups met with Governor Doyle's staff and DNR Secretary Scott Hassett today to express concerns with AB519, the deer baiting and feeding bill pending before the State Assembly.

"We are asking for Governor Doyle's assistance, since the legislature is dead set on passing a bill that could ultimately destroy the deer herd and cause financial devastation to Wisconsin's agriculture industry," says WDHA president Mark Toso.

"This bill is touted as a compromise, but it's that in name only," he continues. "It will not have any measurable effect on the multitude of issues with baiting and feeding. This bill may even increase the risk of disease transmission, since there is proof that smaller bait and feed piles are worse than larger piles. Plus there are serious enforcement concerns with several provisions, thus parts of this bill are meaningless. We think that was by design, since this bill was authored and supported by legislators who want to keep baiting and feeding at any cost. The WDHA and the hundreds of conservation and agriculture groups who oppose deer baiting and feeding were never consulted."

"The Wisconsin state legislature is acting completely irrational and is ignoring the concerns of a majority of Wisconsin citizens and scientists from around the world," continues Toso. "Their actions are condemning the rest of the state to CWD. Rep. Scott Gunderson (R – Union Grove), Sen. Neal Kedzie (R – Elkhorn) and Rep John Gard (R - Peshtigo) are but a few key people who will ultimately be responsible for the continued spread of CWD." Scientists say that deer have been known to pick up and move up to 50 miles, which could very easily result in an infected deer moving into a baiting and feeding zone and establishing CWD in a new area. "A statewide ban is one of a very short list of tools available to try and slow the spread of CWD."

"Virtually every conservation, hunting and agricultural group in the state opposes deer baiting and feeding, I just don't get why the legislature won't listen to the people," says Toso. "Clearly this is all about politics and power, and not serving the public like they were elected to do."

The WDHA is a group of conservation minded deer enthusiasts whose mission is to promote scientific and ecological based deer management in Wisconsin. Our philosophy is do what's best for the deer herd, as we believe that is ultimately what's best for the deer hunter.

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