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January 23, 2008

Patricia Van Gorp
Beacon Associates International
PO Box 361
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Re: Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Stakeholder Group
Minority Report

Dear Ms. Van Gorp,

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress, through our appointed representative Tony Grabski, hereby submits this minority report to be included as part of the CWD Stakeholder Group's final report. As an organization completely dependent on the volunteer efforts of committed individuals, the Conservation Congress appreciates the time and effort given by the members of this group. In several areas, the position of the Conservation Congress is entirely at odds with the position of the Stakeholders Group. We feel as though the position of the Conservation Congress needs to be clarified within the document. This minority report will do that.

The overall position of our organization, which represents the sportsmen and women across the state, is that we support the containment of CWD and hopefully the eventual eradication of CWD. We support continued testing and monitoring. We hope that the final recommendations, and any rules developed as a result of this process would meet this overall objective.

The season framework that was endorsed by the Stakeholders Group is not supported by the Conservation Congress. However, we are all hunters, and as hunters I cannot imagine one of us who would not be torn apart by what has transpired in south central and southeastern Wisconsin. The disease, the virtually year-round deer hunts, the sharpshooters, and the surveillance efforts have greatly impacted the tradition of deer hunting. We all wish deer hunting would return to the days before CWD was found in Wisconsin, but it is here.

However, the remainder of the state is counting on those living and hunting in this area to be the front line of defense to assure that none of the rest of us has to live through this nightmare. It is from this statewide perspective that we present our position. A resolution, very similar to the season framework adopted by the Stakeholders Group was rejected by the Congress Executive Council on January 4, 2008. Further, a second similar season framework was not advanced to the Spring Hearing questionnaire in 2007. That is two votes by our Executive Council to not support a significant relaxation on the hunting seasons prescribed in the CWD zones. Further more, the Congress Big Game Committee has, in the past year, voted to not advance resolutions that would legalize crossbows, nor have they voted to advance resolutions that would allow magnifying scopes on muzzle loading firearms during the traditional muzzleloader seasons. Both of these positions are included in the final season framework proposal. The Congress must honor the work of our study committees and therefore we are unable to support either of these provisions.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we want to be very clear that the Wisconsin Conservation Congress does not support the baiting or feeding of deer. We understand that the Stakeholders Group agrees with our position on the statewide prohibition of deer feeding, but a deer baiting prohibition was not supported. Based on the public opinion which was expressed in a statewide vote at the 2006 spring hearings, and based on the science which our delegates have reviewed, the Conservation Congress remains steadfast in its opposition to deer baiting and feeding statewide.

In closing, I hope you understand that the Congress is not attempting to invalidate the work of this group and we will await the final recommendations prior to developing our final recommendations to the Natural Resources Board. We felt that the representation of the Congress' commitment to this issue needed clarification. We also want the citizens of southern Wisconsin to know that we are all in this together, even though at this time the burden is heavily upon them. They have our commitment that our CWD Study Committee will continue to actively work on this issue, review resolutions and pass along their recommendations to the Executive Council, the DNR and the Natural Resources Board.

Sincerely,

//EH// - 1/23/08

Ed Harvey,
Chair

cc. WCC Executive Council
Tony Grabski, Iowa County WCC delegate
Dave Poff, WCC CWD Committee Chair
WCC Stakeholders Committee Members
Matt Frank, DNR Secretary
Alan Crossley, DNR CWD Program Manager

As established by Wisconsin State Statutes, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only natural resources advisory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources. Their mission is to represent the citizens of Wisconsin by working with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.