

## **Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Management Act**

The *Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Management Act* will support management efforts and research to combat chronic wasting disease (CWD), which is a contagious, neurological disease affecting cervids – deer, elk and moose – that is always fatal.

CWD belongs to the same family of diseases as scrapie in sheep and goats, “mad cow disease,” and even several rare human diseases such as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. There is no known cure for CWD, it is unclear how the disease is transmitted, and the disease continues to spread through cervid populations in North America. As of August 2021, the CDC reports confirmed cases of CWD in at least 25 states, and there are serious concerns that the footprint of the disease will continue to grow.

### **Summary of the Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Management Act**

The bill authorizes \$70 million annually from Fiscal Year 2022 through Fiscal Year 2028 for research and management of chronic wasting disease, with the money to be split evenly between the two purposes. USDA will administer the funds through cooperative agreements.

The research section authorizes funds to be spent on:

1. Methods to effectively detect CWD in live cervids and the environment
2. Testing methods on non-live cervids
3. Genetic resistance to CWD
4. Sustainable cervid harvest management practices to reduce CWD occurrence
5. Factors contributing to local emergence of CWD

The management section authorizes funding for State or Tribal wildlife agencies and departments of agriculture, with the following funding priorities:

1. Areas with the highest incidence of CWD
2. Jurisdictions demonstrating the greatest financial commitment to managing, monitoring, surveying, and researching chronic CWD
3. Efforts to develop comprehensive policies and programs focused on CWD management
4. Areas showing the greatest risk of an initial occurrence of CWD
5. Areas responding to new outbreaks of CWD

The bill also includes authorization for USDA and the state and tribal agencies to develop educational materials to inform the public on CWD and directs USDA to review its herd certification program (HCP) within 18 months.