

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 837

To authorize a special resource study on the spread vectors of chronic wasting disease in Cervidae, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 29, 2019

Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. EMMER, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. GLANFORTE, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KING of Iowa, and Mr. DUFFY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To authorize a special resource study on the spread vectors of chronic wasting disease in Cervidae, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Chronic Wasting Dis-
5 ease Transmission in Cervidae Study Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) Chronic wasting disease continues to spread
2 in wild, free-ranging cervid herds and in captive
3 cervid herds across the United States and Canada,
4 and as of December 2018, is in 26 States and three
5 Canadian provinces.

6 (2) From December 2017 to December 2018
7 alone, the disease was detected for the first time in
8 free-ranging cervid herds in Mississippi, Montana,
9 and Tennessee, and there were new positive detec-
10 tions of the disease in 13 captive cervid herds from
11 Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania,
12 Wisconsin and Quebec, Canada.

13 (3) Six of such herds are being monitored by
14 the National Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certifi-
15 cation Program of the Animal and Plant Health In-
16 spection Service, and therefore are considered to be
17 at low-risk for chronic wasting disease.

18 (4) From June 2017 to September 2018, 10
19 States, including Arkansas, Illinois, Kansas, Min-
20 nesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Texas, West Virginia,
21 Wisconsin, and Wyoming, are already fighting to
22 control the transmission and spread of chronic wast-
23 ing disease and found positive detections for the dis-
24 ease in additional wild, free-ranging cervid herds.

1 (5) New positive detections in captive cervid
2 herds were found in Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota,
3 Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

4 (6) There is no known cure for chronic wasting
5 disease, no reliable live animal test to detect the dis-
6 ease, and only a post-mortem test that provides
7 some measure of reliable detection of the disease.

8 (7) Chronic wasting disease is 100 percent fatal
9 and is arguably the most important disease threat-
10 ening North American cervid resources.

11 (8) The spread of chronic wasting disease con-
12 tinues to increasingly and adversely affect the eco-
13 nomic well-being of rural communities, the hunting
14 public, farmed cervid producers, and State wildlife
15 and agricultural agencies, because the only known
16 measure for reducing the spread of chronic wasting
17 disease is the complete depopulation of herds that
18 test positive for the disease, a drastic measure which
19 comes with great costs for all.

20 (9) The long-term environmental persistence of
21 chronic wasting disease's causative agent means that
22 State wildlife management agencies, State depart-
23 ments of agriculture, and private cervid farmers
24 have relatively few options to mitigate the effects of
25 such disease.

1 under paragraph (1) shall be paid by the Secre-
2 taries.

3 (b) CONTENTS OF THE STUDY.—Within and between
4 wild, captive, and farmed cervid populations, the study—

5 (1) may include, to the extent the United States
6 is affected on a continental scale, the potential im-
7 pacts on the disease from transmissions from Can-
8 ada; and

9 (2) shall—

10 (A) identify—

11 (i) the pathways and mechanisms for
12 the transmission of chronic wasting disease
13 in cervids and cervid products;

14 (ii) the dosage and infection rates for
15 each such pathway and mechanism; and

16 (iii) the relative frequency of each
17 mode of such transmission;

18 (B) identify anthropogenic and environ-
19 mental factors contributing to new chronic
20 wasting disease emergence events, the develop-
21 ment of geographic areas with increased chronic
22 wasting disease prevalence, and overall geo-
23 graphic patterns of chronic wasting disease dis-
24 tribution;

1 (C) identify significant gaps in current sci-
2 entific knowledge regarding the transmission
3 pathways identified under subparagraph (A);

4 (D) identify and prioritize scientific re-
5 search projects that will address the knowledge
6 gaps referred to in subparagraph (C); and

7 (E) review science-based best practices,
8 standards, and guidance regarding the manage-
9 ment of chronic wasting disease in wild, captive,
10 and farmed cervid populations in the United
11 States which have been developed by—

12 (i) the National Chronic Wasting Dis-
13 ease Herd Certification Program of the
14 Animal and Plant Health Inspection Serv-
15 ice;

16 (ii) the United States Geological Sur-
17 vey; and

18 (iii) State wildlife and agricultural
19 agencies, which provide practical, science-
20 based recommendations to State and Fed-
21 eral agencies for minimizing or eliminating
22 the risk of transmission of chronic wasting
23 disease in the United States.

24 (c) DEADLINE.—Not later than 6 months after the
25 date on which funds are first made available for the study

1 under subsection (a), the Secretaries shall submit to the
2 Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representa-
3 tives, the Committee on Natural Resources of the House
4 of Representatives, the Committee on Environment and
5 Public Works of the Senate, and the Committee on Agri-
6 culture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate a report
7 that describes—

8 (1) the findings of the study; and

9 (2) any conclusions and recommendations that
10 the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

11 (d) DATA SHARING.—The Secretaries shall share
12 with the entity conducting the study under subsection (a)
13 data and access to databases on chronic wasting disease
14 under the jurisdiction of—

15 (1) the Veterinary Services Program of the Ani-
16 mal and Plant Health Inspection Service; and

17 (2) the United States Geological Survey.

18 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

19 In this Act:

20 (1) CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE.—The term
21 “chronic wasting disease” means the animal disease
22 afflicting deer, elk, reindeer, and moose populations
23 that—

1 (A) is a transmissible disease of the nerv-
2 ous system resulting in distinctive lesions in the
3 brain; and

4 (B) belongs to the group of diseases known
5 as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies,
6 which group includes scrapie, bovine spongiform
7 encephalopathy, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

8 (2) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries”
9 means—

10 (A) the Secretary of Agriculture, acting
11 through the Administrator of the Animal and
12 Plant Health Inspection Service; and

13 (B) the Secretary of the Interior, acting
14 through the Director of the United States Geo-
15 logical Survey.

16 (3) ACADEMY.—The term “Academy” means
17 the National Academy of Sciences.

18 (4) CERVID.—The term “cervid” means any
19 species within the family Cervidae.

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