

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 6272

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

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 28, 2018

Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. MARINO, and Mr. GOSAR) 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

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## 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 as of  
4           June 2018, is in 25 States.

5           (2) From June 2017 to June 2018 alone, the  
6           disease was detected for the first time in free-rang-  
7           ing cervid herds in Mississippi and Montana and  
8           there were new positive detections of the disease in  
9           13 captive cervid herds from Illinois, Michigan, Min-  
10          nesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

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

16          (4) From June 2017 to June 2018, 10 States,  
17          including Arkansas, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota,  
18          Missouri, Nebraska, Texas, West Virginia, Wis-  
19          consin, and Wyoming, are already fighting to control  
20          the transmission and spread of chronic wasting dis-  
21          ease and found positive detections for the disease in  
22          additional wild, free-ranging cervid herds.

23          (5) New positive detections in captive cervid  
24          herds were found in Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota,  
25          Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

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

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

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

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

23           (10) There are ongoing debates about the pre-  
24 dominant transmission pathways that are causing

1 the new detections and continued spread of chronic  
2 wasting disease in cervids across the United States.

3 **SEC. 3. CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE TRANSMISSION IN**  
4 **CERVIDAE RESOURCE STUDY.**

5 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary shall conduct a special  
6 resource study to identify the predominant pathways and  
7 mechanisms of the transmission of chronic wasting disease  
8 in wild, captive, and farmed populations of species of the  
9 family Cervidae in the United States.

10 (b) CONDUCTING THE STUDY.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—In conducting the study  
12 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall request the  
13 National Academy of Sciences to conduct such study  
14 under an arrangement under which the actual ex-  
15 penses incurred by such Academy in conducting such  
16 study will be paid by the Secretary. If the National  
17 Academy of Sciences is willing to do so, the Sec-  
18 retary shall enter into such an arrangement with  
19 such Academy for the conduct of such study.

20 (2) OTHER ENTITIES.—If the National Acad-  
21 emy of Sciences is unwilling to conduct such study  
22 under such an arrangement, then the Secretary shall  
23 enter into a similar arrangement with an appro-  
24 priate research institute or institute of higher edu-

1 cation under which such institute will conduct such  
2 study and prepare and submit the reports thereon.

3 (3) DATA SHARING.—For integration into the  
4 study, the Secretary shall share with the National  
5 Academy of Sciences or the institute referred to in  
6 paragraph (2) (as the case may be), data and data-  
7 bases on chronic wasting disease under the jurisdic-  
8 tion of Veterinary Services Program within the  
9 United States Department of Agriculture Animal  
10 and Plant Health Inspection Service of the Depart-  
11 ment of Agriculture.

12 (c) CONTENTS OF THE STUDY.—Within and between  
13 wild, captive, and farmed cervid populations, the study  
14 shall—

15 (1) identify—

16 (A) the pathways and mechanisms for the  
17 transmission of chronic wasting disease in  
18 cervids in the United States;

19 (B) the dosage and infection rates for each  
20 such pathway and mechanism; and

21 (C) the relative frequency of each mode of  
22 such transmission;

23 (2) identify anthropogenic and environmental  
24 factors contributing to new chronic wasting disease  
25 emergence events, the development of geographic

1 areas with increased chronic wasting disease preva-  
2 lence, and overall geographic patterns of chronic  
3 wasting disease distribution;

4 (3) identify significant gaps in current scientific  
5 knowledge regarding the transmission pathways  
6 identified under paragraph (1);

7 (4) identify and prioritize scientific research  
8 projects that will address the knowledge gaps re-  
9 ferred to in paragraph (3); and

10 (5) review science-based best practices, stand-  
11 ards, and guidance regarding the management of  
12 chronic wasting disease in wild, captive, and farmed  
13 cervid populations in the United States which have  
14 been developed by—

15 (A) the National Chronic Wasting Disease  
16 Herd Certification Program referred to in sec-  
17 tion 2(3); and

18 (B) State wildlife and agricultural agen-  
19 cies, which provide practical, science-based rec-  
20 ommendations to State and Federal agencies  
21 for minimizing or eliminating the risk of trans-  
22 mission of chronic wasting disease in the  
23 United States.

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

1 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the  
2 Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives  
3 and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and For-  
4 estry of the Senate a report that describes—

5 (1) the findings of the study; and

6 (2) any conclusions and recommendations that  
7 the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

8 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

9 In this Act:

10 (1) **CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE.**—The term  
11 “chronic wasting disease” means the animal disease  
12 afflicting deer, elk, and moose populations that—

13 (A) is a transmissible disease of the nerv-  
14 ous system resulting in distinctive lesions in the  
15 brain; and

16 (B) belongs to the group of diseases known  
17 as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies,  
18 which group includes scrapie, bovine spongiform  
19 encephalopathy, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

20 (2) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means  
21 the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Ani-  
22 mal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

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