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**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

# Montana Fish & Wildlife Commission

December 7, 2017

Keith Culver, President  
Wyoming Game and Fish Commission  
P.O. Box 296  
Newcastle, WY 82701

Dear President Culver and Commissioners:

We are writing this letter as Montana's Fish and Wildlife Commission to express Montana's concern over the recently confirmed presence of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Montana's wildlife. Montana's wildlife is one of our state's most precious resources and is a core part of our state's hunting culture. We know that Wyoming also holds its wildlife resource in high regard.

Wyoming has been living with CWD for decades. Wyoming wildlife populations have suffered and will continue to suffer if CWD continues to spread. Much like Montanans, Wyomingites are proud, self-reliant people who do not take kindly to an outsider telling them what to do. So, it is with sincere humility and respect, that we ask Wyoming to help us address the CWD threat. Neither state can solve this on our own, and we are writing to ask for your help.

As westerners, we all innately understand that feeding wildlife is a mistake and ultimately harms the very wildlife we all cherish. As a commission, we have been working to address brucellosis in our elk herd through a variety of management techniques that emphasize separating elk and buffalo from domestic livestock during the high-risk period of the year. While not perfect, Montana has been able to address brucellosis outbreaks and retain the brucellosis free status that is so important to our livestock industry.

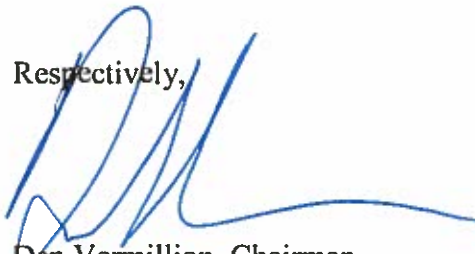
Unlike Brucellosis, CWD, so far, has shown no ability affect livestock. However, it has shown that it can devastate wildlife populations. Scientists agree that, when CWD hits the feed grounds in Wyoming, the unnatural concentrations of wildlife in the feed grounds will accelerate the spread of the disease. Some of the animals that spend the winter months on the feed grounds eventually co-mingle with Montana wildlife, and this interaction becomes a disease vector for Montana's elk and deer populations.

We respect the fact that how Wyoming manages its affairs is up to Wyoming. However, Montana's ability to combat CWD will depend upon decisions that Wyoming makes about its wildlife management. Over the long-term, the feed grounds make your wildlife populations less healthy, less stable, and much more vulnerable to a catastrophic disease event.

We are cognizant of the important role the feedgrounds play in the Wyoming economy. Whether it is limiting the impact wildlife has on private grazing ground or the improved hunter success for elk in the areas around Yellowstone, the feedgrounds are a complicated issue for you, and we understand that they cannot be shuttered quickly. However, we implore you to begin the process of looking at alternatives to the present management regime that unnaturally concentrates wildlife in feed grounds each winter and increases the pace at which CWD infects both states' wildlife populations.

If we do not address CWD, we will all be culpable in leaving a greatly devalued landscape to future generations. As a Commission, we believe that we cannot successfully address CWD without Wyoming's help. As your neighbor, we ask you to begin the process of closing these feed grounds. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectively,



Dan Vermillion, Chairman  
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission