

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Senator McBroom offered the following concurrent resolution:

1 A concurrent resolution to urge the Natural Resources
2 Commission and the Department of Natural Resources to end the
3 research study begun in 2019 concerning the effectiveness of antler
4 point restrictions as a management tool in the chronic wasting
5 disease core area.

6 Whereas, Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a contagious fatal
7 neurodegenerative disease affecting several species of cervids
8 (deer, elk, and moose), including white-tailed deer. CWD is
9 considered the most important disease currently threatening North
10 American cervids. It belongs to a group of diseases known as
11 transmissible spongiform encephalopathies that are caused by
12 infectious misfolded proteins called prions that attack the brain

1 of infected animals, resulting in death; and

2 Whereas, While CWD has been identified in deer in several
3 counties in both the Upper and Lower Peninsulas, five counties in
4 the Lower Peninsula have been identified as the Core CWD Area.
5 These counties, Ionia, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, and Newaygo, are
6 the focus of the antler point study; and

7 Whereas, The Department of Natural Resources is studying the
8 influence of antler point restrictions on hunter harvest decisions.
9 While harvest decisions may affect population, herd composition,
10 and demographics, these decisions will not provide any data
11 regarding changes to CWD prevalence, disease transmission, disease
12 related mortality, or other data directly related to CWD within the
13 Core CWD Area; and

14 Whereas, The antler point restrictions under the study will be
15 in effect through 2021; and

16 Whereas, The Department of Natural Resources' CWD Response
17 Plan clearly acknowledges that increasing harvest of yearling bucks
18 will minimize disease spread via dispersal. Conversely, antler
19 point restrictions protect most yearling bucks from harvest,
20 facilitating increased dispersal, enlarging the geographic scope of
21 CWD, and increasing the number of mature bucks in the herd.
22 Demographic sampling suggests that mature bucks have up to double
23 the prevalence rate of other deer in the herd; and

24 Whereas, Adequate safeguards to prevent an adverse impact to
25 the resource caused by antler point restrictions are lacking from
26 this experiment. Eliminating antler point restrictions will
27 increase the harvest of yearling males thus reducing the geographic
28 spread of CWD and also reducing overall herd prevalence; and

29 Whereas, Discontinuing the study before it is completed is the

1 decision of the Natural Resources Commission in consultation with
2 the director of the DNR. Preliminary data resulting from this study
3 fails to support the premise that antler point restrictions result
4 in changes which could be beneficial to mitigating CWD. This
5 evidence suggests that antler point restrictions resulted in a
6 significant decrease in the deer harvest, which is detrimental to
7 CWD mitigation efforts. Continuing this study will result in
8 irreversible biological harm to the resource due to the lack of
9 adequate safeguards mitigating the adverse impact that antler point
10 restrictions have in areas where CWD is a factor; now, therefore,
11 be it

12 Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives
13 concurring), That we urge the Department of Natural Resources to
14 end research concerning the effectiveness of antler point
15 restrictions as a management tool to reduce chronic wasting
16 disease; and be it further

17 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
18 Director of the Department of Natural Resources and the members of
19 the Natural Resources Commission.