



ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

"Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action"

May 25, 2021

Hon. Jason Nixon
Minister, Alberta Environment
Email: AEP.Minister@gov.ab.ca

Hon. Warren Kaeding
Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment
Email: env.minister@gov.sk.ca

Kelvin Matiuk
Western Area Director General
Canada Food Inspection Agency
Email: kelvin.mathuik@canada.ca

Rick James-Davies
Senior Director
Canada Food Inspection Agency
Email: rick.james-davies@canada.ca

Dear Sirs:

The USGS map, May 2021, included below, is alarming and most disconcerting. It leaves Alberta Wilderness Association incredulous as to why Alberta and Saskatchewan continue to allow the farming of wild ungulates and why CFIA has taken no action against these farms that have released diseases, especially Chronic Wasting Disease, into wild populations for at least four decades. The map indicates that Manitoba is imminently threatened on its western boundary by CWD and there is a steady movement of the disease in Alberta west towards B.C. AWA is asking our federal and provincial governments to take action now to stop the continuous spread of new infections into the wild from existing farms by outlawing the farming of native wildlife.

Alberta Wilderness Association is Alberta's oldest conservation association, dating to the middle 1960's. We have long acted to protect wilderness as the best of our public lands, along with our native wildlife and its habitats. From the inception of game farming in Alberta, which was around 1980, when a new, internally developed and flawed Wildlife Policy was introduced that included the commercialization of wildlife through game farming, AWA has voiced strong opposition to this faulted industry. We have pointed out the specter of diseases when animals are kept confined in unnatural numbers, along with the probability of disease transmission from farms to the wild. Within only a few years from inception,

Tb and CWD were rampaging on game farms in both provinces, costing many animal and even human lives. Humans contracted Tb from infected farms and their cleanup cost taxpayers \$millions in subsidies.

Game farming has been subsidized by the taxpayer since its inception, first by the sacrifice of wild animals to serve on farms, and then by unending costs to keep these farms afloat, to clean up after they have contaminated landscapes and in huge costs to native wildlife that carry the disease burden. There are continuing costs to try to keep the hunting public safe, costs when eradication programs are in place. Now there have to be costs just to maintain the existence of game farms as there can be no or very few markets for antler or meat coming from CWD infested provinces. Why are our governments willing to so burden the taxpayer and the public's wildlife by prolonging the life of game farming?

Does the public have to wait until beleaguered caribou herds are finally infected with CWD before action is taken provincially or federally to halt the flow of disease from farms into the wild? Or, will it take that ultimate jump from a diseased animal to a hunter before action is taken?

Yes, CWD is now established in the wild in Saskatchewan and Alberta and it is spreading rapidly towards other provinces, but this disease is also being constantly fed afresh from contaminated game farms. By at least breaking that chain of infection, the burden on wildlife would be reduced. AWA asks that our governments take action immediately to outlaw game farms and break the chain of new infections and of supporting more subsidized cleanups.

Sincerely yours
ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Vivian Pharis", is centered within a light pink rectangular box.

Vivian Pharis,
AWA Board Member Emeritus

