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December 21, 2016

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Bureau of Wildlife
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4754

Dear Bureau of Wildlife,

New York Farm Bureau (NYFB), the State's largest general agricultural advocacy organization, appreciates the opportunity to comment on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) informal proposed rules on changes to hunting regulations regarding amendments to the existing Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Regulation, 6 NYCRR Part 189. These amendments would prohibit the retail sale and use of urine, glands, or excreted materials from any CWD-susceptible animals for scents, lures, or attractants while afield. NYFB and its members have concerns with the informal proposed rule and would like to offer the following feedback to DEC.

NYFB opposes any regulations that would prohibit the sale of deer urine from deer farms in New York State that have been certified to be CWD-free. Deer farms throughout New York State often rely on the sale of deer urine as a source of income. Eliminating the farms' ability to market deer urine will negatively impact their economic viability but also impact sporting goods stores, both small and large, that derive revenue from the sale of deer urine.

Deer farms in New York State go through a rigorous testing and compliance process through both the Department of Agriculture and Markets and DEC, which includes the deer herd being evaluated annually by an accredited veterinarian to ensure that all deer are healthy and any deer sold from one New York State deer farm to another New York State deer farm must go through strict testing before it can be transported. Deer farms that have the CWD-free status must prove that any deer originating from their farm tests negative for CWD ensuring there is no spread of CWD. No deer farm wants to test positive for CWD and works hard to ensure that the animals are healthy and do not come in contact with outside sources that could spread CWD.

While NYFB fully understands the threat of CWD to the New York deer and hunting industries, NYFB believes that eliminating the sale of deer urine will not be the ultimate answer to controlling CWD in New York State. More scientific research is needed to identify if CWD prions can be transmitted in deer urine and taken up by plants and then accumulate to the point where a deer eating the plant can become infected with CWD. Instead of implementing a blanket ban on the sale of deer urine, DEC could allow farms that have been certified CWD-free the ability to sell urine as long as they continue their CWD-free status. Current DEC regulations, 6 NYCRR 189.7 already provides that "no person shall collect, possess, transport or sell the urine of any deer, moose or elk located or taken within the CWD containment area." If CWD

was to be found in a particular location, the Department already has the ability to prevent the deer urine from being collected and sold.

NYFB thanks the Department of Environmental Conservation for the opportunity to submit these comments on the informal proposed regulations to the Chronic Wasting Disease Regulations, Part 189. If you have any questions regarding these comments, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lauren Williams". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Lauren Williams
Assistant Director of Public Policy