



# Oregon

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**To:** The Honorable Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair  
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources



## House Bill 2294

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Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

The department appreciates the opportunity to discuss House Bill 2294 with you today. House Bill 2294 requires that commercial product that contains or is derived from cervid urine and designed for luring, attracting or enticing cervids be from a herd free of chronic wasting disease.

The state's plentiful and healthy wildlife is a natural resource Oregonian's cherish and serves as a major cultural, aesthetic, and economic asset to all who enjoy the outdoors and hike, hunt or recreate in wildlife habitat. The health of this valuable resource also carries risks related directly and indirectly to the interstate movement of animals, animal parts, animal products and diseases they may carry. In particular, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) of wild cervids is considered by scientists and managers as one of the most important wildlife diseases facing the nation and presently has spread to 26 states, 4 Canadian provinces and resides on 3 continents. In Oregon, the wild cervids susceptible to CWD are white-tailed and mule deer including black-tailed deer, elk and moose.

CWD is a neurological disease composed of misfolded proteins called prions. It is transmitted directly by both nose-to-nose contact between animals and from contact with contaminated environment the cervids occupy. Prions have been detected in saliva, feces, blood, antler velvet, and urine of infected animals. It is highly transmissible, 100% fatal, and there is no cure, treatment, or immunity to the disease. Infected animals may shed prions in their urine for months (or years) prior to developing clinical signs. CWD, once established, is extremely difficult if not impossible to eradicate. Other state's attempts to eradicate CWD have failed. Efforts to control its spread through herd reduction and other methods have had limited success.

Prions in urine spread on the ground enter the soil and then can become nearly permanently bound in the soil. Plants are capable of binding prions on leaves and taking up prions into their tissues; those prions remain infectious. Commercial cervid urine, as a commercial scent product, is used to mask human scent or attract animals to a location where they can be viewed, hunted or

photographed. It is sold as doe in estrous or buck/bull urine and is only collected from captive cervids held in privately owned facilities.

The department is not aware of any Oregon captive cervid facilities commercially producing cervid urine scents. There is no federal or state validated test for determining the presence of CWD in urine. Twenty percent of the urine products on the market are “synthetic” products which are easily mixed with natural product. However, as with real cervid urine there is currently no test to determine whether a product is contaminated with prions.

Cervid urine products are manufactured in states that have numerous cervid farms, and that may also have CWD in wild and/or captive populations. CWD continues to be found in captive cervid facilities with 40 facilities testing positive since 2012 in 9 states. Urine is often collected through a grate system, which allows mixing of saliva and feces with the urine prior to filtering. This mixing could increase the likelihood of CWD-infected urine with higher concentrations of prion entering the scent market. Urine production and sales is not regulated by any agency, nor are there any testing or marking requirements of urine products. At the merchant, the purchaser cannot determine from the labeling the farm or states any product originated. Urine is not tested for CWD by any laboratory. These practices and factors increase the risk of the CWD infected cervid urine scent product being sold, shipped and used by Oregonians or non-residents visiting Oregon.

To meet the objective of the language in the bill that “commercial products is derived from a herd that is tested and found to be free of chronic wasting disease” the urine product may require application/implementation of one of the following:

- 1) Product is bottled from single source herds, tested over time via federally validated testing, from states and provinces identified as not detecting CWD within their boundaries and the product certified by a regulatory agency; or
- 2) Product certified by a state or federal regulatory agency using a federally validated test to confirm the product is 100% synthetic.

Multiple states and provinces have already implemented bans on natural cervid urine products including Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, New Mexico, Vermont, Virginia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Yukon Territory.

The effect of CWD on agency budgets and expenditures can be both direct and indirect. Following the finding of CWD in Wisconsin in 2002, Wisconsin has spent just over \$48 million dollars for disease monitoring and efforts to reduce the spread and prevalence of CWD. That was after a 10% decline in hunting license sales immediately following the detection. There is currently no USDA funding program to help mitigate this unprecedented expense. The direct and indirect impacts of CWD on wildlife agency resources and the broader impacts on state, provincial, and federal economies can be significant and difficult to offset.

While having no position on the bill, the department thanks you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.