

2025 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 75

BY REPRESENTATIVES RISER, ADAMS, BAYHAM, BEAULLIEU, BUTLER, ROBBY CARTER, CHASSION, COATES, COX, DEVILLIER, DICKERSON, ECHOLS, EGAN, FIRMENT, FISHER, FONTENOT, JACKSON, TRAVIS JOHNSON, MILLER, NEWELL, OWEN, SCHAMERHORN, TAYLOR, WALTERS, WILDER, WYBLE, AND ZERINGUE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To create the Chronic Wasting Disease Task Force to study and recommend best practices for the management and mitigation of chronic wasting disease in the state.

WHEREAS, chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a neurodegenerative disease found in most deer species (cervids), including but not limited to white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, red deer, moose, and caribou; and

WHEREAS, CWD is infectious, causes irreversible damage to brain tissue, is similar to mad cow disease in cattle, is always fatal to the cervid, and there is no treatment; and

WHEREAS, CWD was first found in Louisiana in wild deer in 2022 and in captive cervid pens in 2024; and

WHEREAS, not only have cervids within Louisiana tested positive for CWD, but the disease has also been found in the neighboring states of Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has already adopted certain management policies to contain the spread of CWD in Louisiana, with such policies including the establishment of control zones within which there are feeding and baiting restrictions, restrictions on the movement of deer body parts, and testing any deer harvested from within control zones for CWD, but there may be other policies and management techniques that should be evaluated; and

WHEREAS, in addition the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has adopted a rule prohibiting the importation, transportation, or possession of any cervid carcass or parts of a cervid carcass, with certain exemptions for cleaned parts with no part of the spinal column or the head attached, or taxidermy mounts; and

WHEREAS, many local businesses provide the food for deer feeders, bait to be placed in the woods, and mineral and salt licks; and

WHEREAS, restrictions and bans on feeding deer, mineral and salt licks, and placing bait in the control area have a detrimental economic impact on these businesses; and

WHEREAS, the introduction of CWD into Louisiana has the potential to be devastating to the deer hunting and breeding communities in the state and the businesses that support those activities, so all efforts to mitigate CWD and prevent its spread within the state should be investigated; and

WHEREAS, a task force of experienced and interested parties could function in an advisory manner to the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, and the legislature as policies for management of CWD in Louisiana are discussed, recommended, and developed.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby create the Chronic Wasting Disease Task Force to study and recommend best practices for managing CWD and mitigating its spread within the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the CWD Task Force shall be comprised of the following members:

(A) Members representing state government shall include the following:

(1) One member of the Senate appointed by the president of the Senate.

(2) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House.

(3) One Wildlife and Fisheries Commissioner, designated by the chairman of the commission.

(4) The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries State Wildlife Veterinarian.

(5) The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Deer Program Manager.

(6) The Department of Agriculture and Forestry State Veterinarian or his designee.

(B) One member shall be appointed by each of the following non-governmental organizations:

(1) The Louisiana Landowners Association.

(2) The Natural Resource Management Association.

(3) The Louisiana Forestry Association.

(4) The Louisiana Wildlife Federation.

(5) The Louisiana Farm Bureau.

(C) Members representing private industry and landowners shall include the following:

(1) One member from a private timber company with property in Louisiana's CWD Control Area and other CWD Management Zones in the Southeast.

(2) One private landowner from each CWD Enhanced Mitigation Zone, at least one of which shall be enrolled in the Deer Management Assistance Program.

(3) One member representing deer processing businesses operating within an existing CWD Control Area.

(4) One member representing a feed store business operating within an existing CWD Control Area.

(5) A representative appointed by Whitetails of Louisiana.

(D) Members representing the federal government shall include the following, which shall serve as non-voting members:

(1) One forest service biologist appointed by the United States Forest Service.

(2) One refuge project leader from a complex within a CWD Control Area appointed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

(3) One member appointed by the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Veterinary Services.

(4) One member appointed by the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Wildlife Services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the member of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives shall serve as chairman of the task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force shall serve without compensation; however, the task force members representing state agencies may receive the same reimbursement of travel expenses for attending task force meetings as is allowed for other state employees' travel.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries shall staff the CWD Task Force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is charged with studying and providing recommendations regarding, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Evaluating practices being used for testing and tracking in the state regarding their usefulness and whether they meet the best practices recommended by the CWD management and research community, including state and national agencies and partners.

(2) Identifying ways in which state agencies can coordinate information sharing on new CWD cases in the state to provide for improved response and public notification, including mapping.

(3) Identifying the level of monitoring and reporting of CWD cases in both captive and wild herds that can provide a comprehensive look at the rate of spread and possible source areas, or hot spots, to develop a more comprehensive response if needed.

(4) Identifying containment protocols for both wild and captive deer populations, including those currently practiced in the state and those not being currently practiced in the state.

(5) Evaluating existing plans, regulations, and statutes, and identification of updates that may be required for regulatory measures in order to provide for effective response in management of wild and captive deer populations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment, the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, the House Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development before the commencement of the 2027 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to each task force member, or organization charged with appointing a member of the task force.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE