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☞ Details: Legislative Audit Bureau Report 06-13: An Evaluation: Chronic Wasting Disease, Department of Natural Resources

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2005-06

(session year)

Joint

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

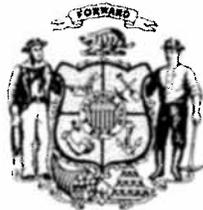
Committee on Audit...

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

- Committee Reports ... **CR**
- Executive Sessions ... **ES**
- Public Hearings ... **PH**

INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE FOR AND AGAINST PROPOSAL

- Appointments ... **Appt** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Clearinghouse Rules ... **CRule** (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
- Hearing Records ... bills and resolutions (w/Record of Comm. Proceedings)
(**ab** = Assembly Bill) (**ar** = Assembly Resolution) (**ajr** = Assembly Joint Resolution)
(**sb** = Senate Bill) (**sr** = Senate Resolution) (**sjr** = Senate Joint Resolution)
- Miscellaneous ... **Misc**



Wisconsin State Legislature

March 16, 2006

Senator Carol A. Roessler and
Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz, Co-chairpersons
Joint Legislative Audit Committee
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Senator Roessler and Representative Jeskewitz:

We are writing to request an audit of the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) efforts to address chronic wasting disease (CWD). Since CWD was first identified in Wisconsin in February 2002, the DNR has spent millions to combat the disease, but apparently has little to show for its efforts.

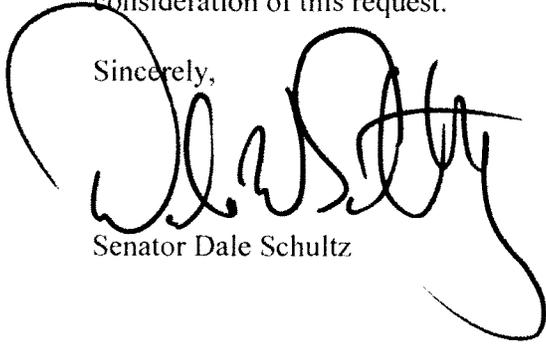
Despite the growing amounts invested to combat CWD, the disease continues to spread. In addition, I am concerned that DNR's focus on CWD has come at the expense of other fish and wildlife programs. Citizens who fund these efforts through their hunting and fishing fees need an accounting of all expenditures and work effort being devoted to CWD, including the specific activities and goods involved. In addition, an independent assessment is needed of whether DNR's efforts to eradicate the disease are working.

We respectfully request that an audit of the DNR's efforts include:

- a detailed accounting of all expenditures associated with CWD, including administrative costs, staffing costs, and supplies and services;
- an analysis of whether appropriate goals have been established for eradicating or preventing the spread of disease;
- an assessment of the effect CWD has had on other fish and wildlife projects;
- an analysis of the expenditures of other agencies involved in addressing CWD; and
- a determination of whether DNR has a reasonable and cost-effective plan for dealing with CWD in the future.

I believe these are important questions that need to be addressed. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dale Schultz'. The signature is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Senator Dale Schultz

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Freese'.

Representative Stephen Freese



Joint Legislative Audit Committee
Hearing Preparation Material
April 5, 2006

- I. Roll Call (Co-chair Roessler)
 - A. Members excused – Senator Fitzgerald
 - B. Members late – ?

- II. Opening Statement (Co-chair Roessler)

“Good morning Committee members.

In this hearing, the Committee will consider authorizing three audits. We will begin with a public hearing on the proposed audit of Information Technology Systems in state government, to be followed by public hearings on the proposed audits of the Wetland Permitting and Mitigation programs and Chronic Wasting Disease. The basis for our discussion will be the audit scope memos prepared for the Committee by the Legislative Audit Bureau. Copies of these documents are available in the hearing room and from the Audit Bureau’s website for those listening live via the Internet. It is my intention to conduct one executive session in which we will vote on approval of all three proposed audits. Those wishing to testify are encouraged to fill out a hearing slip and return it to the page staff located in the back of the room.

Having described those logistics, let’s begin. The first item is the proposed audit of Information Technology Systems in state government. We will hear first from the Legislative Audit Bureau, to be followed by staff from the Department of Administration. While State Auditor Janice Mueller comes forward, let me acknowledge that this audit was requested by Co-chair Jeskewitz, Senator Cowles, and me in response to a number of concerns about the timeliness, cost effectiveness, and ultimate success of a number of “big ticket” projects across State government. I will ask the State Auditor to begin her testimony by describing the parameters of this audit effort in greater detail.”

III. **Proposed Audit: *Information Technology Systems***

- A. Requestors: Senator Roessler, Representative Jeskewitz, Senator Cowles
- B. Scope parameters (see bullet points from scope memo)
- C. Testimony Order
 - 1. LAB (Janice Mueller, State Auditor; with Kate Wade)
 - 2. Department of Administration (Sean Dilweg, Executive Assistant and ?)
 - 3. Legislators?
 - 4. Public testimony

IV. **Proposed Audit: *Wetland Permitting and Mitigation Programs***

- A. Transitional Statement (Co-chair Roessler)

“The next item on our agenda is consideration of an audit requested by Senator Brown and a number of other legislators on the wetland permitting and mitigation programs administered by the Department of Natural Resources. I will ask State Auditor Janice Mueller to come forward and describe the parameters for this proposed audit.”
- B. Requestors

Senators Brown, Harsdorf, and Zien
Representatives Gronemus, Kreibich, Moulton, Musser, Pettis, Suder, Wood
- C. Scope parameters (see bullet points from scope memo)
- D. Testimony Order
 - 1. LAB (Janice Mueller, State Auditor; with Paul Stuiber)
 - 2. DNR (Todd Ambs, Division Administrator - Water and Mary Ellen Vollbrecht, Section Chief - Rivers and Habitat Protection)
 - 3. Legislators?
 - 4. Public testimony

V. **Proposed Audit: Chronic Wasting Disease**

A. Transitional Statement (Co-chair Roessler)

“The final item on our agenda is consideration of an audit requested by Senator Schultz and Representative Freese on costs and outcomes of the states efforts to eradicate chronic wasting disease. The Legislative Audit Bureau released a letter report on this topic in October 2003. I will ask State Auditor Janice Mueller to come forward and describe the parameters for this proposed audit.”

B. Requestors: Senator Schultz and Representative Freese

C. Scope Parameters (see bullet points from scope memo)

D. Testimony Order

1. LAB (Janice Mueller, State Auditor; with Paul Stuiber)
2. DNR (Laurie Osterndorf, Division Administrator - Lands and Alan Crossley, Wildlife Manager South Central Region)
3. Legislators?
4. Public testimony

VI. Executive Session

A. Call Committee into Executive Session (co-chair Roessler)

B. Roll Call (Karen)

C. Is there a motion to approve the scope of the proposed audit of **information technology systems in state government** as set forth in the memorandum from the Legislative Audit Bureau, dated March 22, 2006? Is there a second?

D. Is there any discussion?

E. Vote (Karen calls roll call vote)

F. Is there a motion to approve the scope of the proposed audit of **wetland permitting and designation programs** as set forth in the memorandum from the Legislative Audit Bureau, dated March 22, 2006? Is there a second?

G. Vote (Karen calls roll call vote)

H. Is there any discussion?

I. Is there a motion to approve the scope of the proposed audit of **chronic wasting disease** as set forth in the memorandum from the Legislative Audit Bureau, dated March 22, 2006? Is there a second?

J. Is there any discussion?

K. Vote (Karen calls roll call vote)

J. Adjourn executive session

K. Adjourn public hearing





STATE OF WISCONSIN
Legislative Audit Bureau

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Janice Mueller
State Auditor

DATE: November 15, 2006

TO: Karen Asbjornson and Pamela Matthews
Committee Clerks to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee

FROM: Paul J. Stuibler 
Deputy State Auditor for Program Evaluation

SUBJECT: Report 06-13: An Evaluation of Chronic Wasting Disease

Enclosed is an evaluation of the state's efforts to address chronic wasting disease (CWD). CWD is a fatal neurological disease that affects members of the deer family, including white-tailed deer and elk. Four state agencies are involved in combating the disease and monitoring its spread:

- the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for coordinating CWD management in the wild deer population;
- farm-raised deer are the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection;
- the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory provides CWD testing and carcass disposal services; and
- the Department of Health and Family Services investigates possible effects on human health.

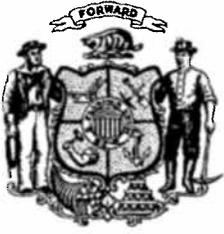
Of the \$32.3 million these state agencies spent combating CWD from fiscal year (FY) 2001-02 through FY 2005-06, \$26.8 million was spent by DNR and \$20.1 million was funded from fees paid by hunters and anglers that were deposited into the Fish and Wildlife Account of the Conservation Fund.

To date, DNR's efforts to eradicate CWD in the wild deer population have not been effective. In the CWD zones, which were established by DNR to monitor and control the disease, neither the number of deer nor the rate of infection has decreased. In addition, the number of deer killed in CWD zones declined from 23.1 per square mile during the 2003 hunting season to 17.4 per square mile during the 2005 hunting season.

The report will be released on Thursday, November 16, at 2:00 p.m. Please let us know if you have any questions.

PS/bm

Enclosures

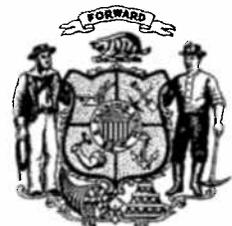


The following document was too large to scan into the committee record. The cover and table of contents, if available, have been scanned for your convenience.

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State of Wisconsin - Legislative Reference Bureau
1 East Main Street, Suite 200
Madison, WI 53703



**Report 06-13
November 2006**

An Evaluation

Chronic Wasting Disease

Department of Natural Resources

2005-2006 Joint Legislative Audit Committee Members

Senate Members:

Carol A. Roessler, Co-chairperson
Robert Cowles
Scott Fitzgerald
Mark Miller
Julie Lassa

Assembly Members:

Suzanne Jeskewitz, Co-chairperson
Samantha Kerkman
Dean Kaufert
David Travis
David Cullen

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT BUREAU

The Bureau is a nonpartisan legislative service agency responsible for conducting financial and program evaluation audits of state agencies. The Bureau's purpose is to provide assurance to the Legislature that financial transactions and management decisions are made effectively, efficiently, and in compliance with state law and that state agencies carry out the policies of the Legislature and the Governor. Audit Bureau reports typically contain reviews of financial transactions, analyses of agency performance or public policy issues, conclusions regarding the causes of problems found, and recommendations for improvement.

Reports are submitted to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee and made available to other committees of the Legislature and to the public. The Audit Committee may arrange public hearings on the issues identified in a report and may introduce legislation in response to the audit recommendations. However, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in the report are those of the Legislative Audit Bureau. For more information, write the Bureau at 22 E. Mifflin Street, Suite 500, Madison, WI 53703, call (608) 266-2818, or send e-mail to leg.audit.info@legis.state.wi.us. Electronic copies of current reports are available on line at www.legis.state.wi.us/lab

State Auditor - Janice Mueller

Audit Prepared by

Paul Stuibler, Deputy State Auditor and Contact Person
Cherry Hill
Ben Monty
Zachary Ramirez
Mary Regan

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STATE OF WISCONSIN

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Janice Mueller
State Auditor

November 16, 2006

Senator Carol A. Roessler and
Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz, Co-chairpersons
Joint Legislative Audit Committee
State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Senator Roessler and Representative Jeskewitz:

As requested by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, we have completed an evaluation of state efforts to manage chronic wasting disease (CWD), a fatal neurological disease of deer. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for coordinating CWD management in the wild deer population. Farm-raised deer are the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory provides CWD testing and carcass disposal services, while the Department of Health and Family Services investigates possible effects on human health. Through fiscal year (FY) 2005-06, these agencies spent \$32.3 million managing the disease.

DNR has developed several strategies to manage CWD, within the geographic areas in which infected deer are known to live, which are known as CWD zones. They include altering the length and rules of hunting seasons, establishing a ban on baiting and feeding deer, using sharpshooters, and creating monetary incentives for hunters to shoot more deer.

To date, DNR's efforts to eradicate CWD in the free-ranging deer population have not been effective. Neither the estimated number of deer in CWD zones nor the percentage infected with CWD has decreased. In addition, fewer deer have been killed in the CWD zones: the number declined from 23.1 deer per square mile in the 2003 hunting season to 17.4 deer per square mile in the 2005 hunting season.

In an October 2006 report to the Natural Resources Board, DNR conceded the need to modify its management efforts to more effectively address CWD. We include options for DNR and the Legislature to more effectively address the disease and control costs in the future.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us by staff of DNR, other state agencies, and interest groups. DNR's response follows the report.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Mueller
State Auditor

JM/PS/ss

Report Highlights ■

DNR accounted for \$26.8 million of the \$32.3 million spent on CWD through FY 2005-06.

To date, DNR's efforts to eradicate CWD have not been effective.

DATCP has taken steps to limit the spread of CWD in farm-raised deer.

Hunters must wait longer to receive CWD testing results for their deer.

DHFS reviews potential effects of CWD on human health.

Wisconsin's approach to CWD should be reevaluated.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal neurological disease that affects members of the deer family, including white-tailed deer and elk. It was first identified among free-ranging deer within the state in February 2002. In the past five fiscal years, four state agencies have spent \$32.3 million to address the disease and monitor its spread, both in the wild and among farm-raised deer.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which accounted for 82.9 percent of all expenditures, has attempted to eradicate CWD by reducing the number of free-ranging deer in areas where it has been identified. The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), which regulates deer farms, has established herd-monitoring programs and issues quarantines. The Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, which is operated by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, tests deer tissue for infection and disposes of infected carcasses. The Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) monitors potential human health effects.

Legislators and hunters have raised concerns about the cost and effectiveness of efforts to eradicate CWD. At the request of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, we therefore analyzed:

- trends in program expenditures and staffing levels;
- the effectiveness of DNR's current approach to CWD;
- DATCP's management of the disease in farm-raised deer;

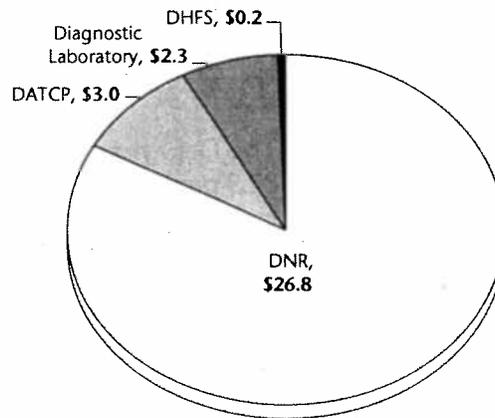
- the role of the Diagnostic Laboratory in conducting CWD tests and disposing of deer carcasses; and
- activities undertaken by DHFS to address potential human health concerns.

CWD Expenditures

DNR is the lead agency for coordinating Wisconsin's efforts to address CWD and for managing the disease in the free-ranging deer herd. From fiscal year (FY) 2001-02 through FY 2005-06, DNR spent \$26.8 million on CWD, as shown in Figure 1. Nearly two-thirds of the \$32.3 million that all state agencies spent to address CWD, or \$20.1 million, has been provided from the Fish and Wildlife Account of the Conservation Fund. That account is funded primarily through fees paid by hunters and anglers.

Figure 1

Expenditures by Agency
(In Millions)



In FY 2005-06, DNR, DATCP, the Diagnostic Laboratory, and DHFS employed 58.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff to address CWD. Most were wildlife biologists and technicians employed by DNR.

Disease Management in Free-Ranging Deer

Through June 2006, 651 free-ranging deer have tested positive for CWD in Wisconsin. All were from the southern part of the state, and 590 were from Dane and Iowa counties.

DNR has adopted two main strategies to limit the spread of CWD in free-ranging deer: surveillance to determine the disease's prevalence, and reducing the deer population in areas it has defined as CWD zones. To reduce the number of deer and limit the spread of CWD, DNR has:

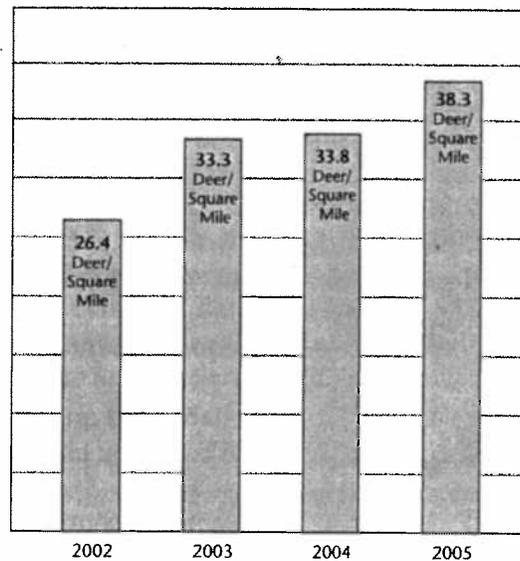
- increased the length of deer hunting seasons;
- required hunters to shoot a doe before shooting a buck;
- established and enforced a ban on baiting and feeding deer in 26 counties; and
- created incentives for hunters that include monetary rewards, low-cost permits, and a program to donate venison to food pantries.

DNR also relies on sharpshooters who are DNR employees. Sharpshooting efforts by DNR staff accounted for 5.2 percent of deer killed in the 2004 and 2005 hunting seasons.

Available data indicate that to date, DNR's efforts to eradicate CWD have not been effective:

- in CWD zones, the number of deer killed has declined from 23.1 per square mile during the 2003 hunting season to 17.4 per square mile during the 2005 hunting season;
- the CWD infection rate in the 210-square-mile "core area" that DNR uses to monitor infection rates has not declined; and
- the estimated number of deer in CWD zones has increased from a post-hunt population of 26.4 deer per square mile in 2002 to 38.3 deer per square mile in 2005, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Estimated Number of Deer in CWD Zones¹

¹ Post-hunt population. In the period shown, the size of CWD zones increased from 2,510 to 3,682 square miles. Because of changes in methodology, DNR staff believe population estimates for 2002 cannot be compared with later years and that changes in post-hunt populations are statistically insignificant.

Disease Management in Farm-Raised Deer

DATCP regulates farm-raised deer, which include both native deer and exotic species such as sika and reindeer. Anyone who wishes to sell live deer within Wisconsin must enroll in DATCP's herd monitoring program.

The monitoring program supplements mandatory CWD testing for all farm-raised deer that are 16 months of age or older at the time of death. It requires annual reporting on the health of deer from enrolled herds. Farm owners may not import deer from outside of Wisconsin unless they are from herds that have been monitored in their state or country of origin.

DATCP quarantines the herd of any farm on which a deer tests positive for CWD. It is also authorized to quarantine farms from which a CWD-positive deer originated and those whose herds may have been exposed to CWD. Through June 2006, DATCP issued CWD-related quarantines for 43 deer farms. A total of 95 animals tested positive for CWD on 7 of these farms.

CWD Testing and Disposal

We found increases in both the number of CWD tests performed by the Diagnostic Laboratory during the nine-day regular gun hunting season and the time required to report test results. On average, test results were not available until 51.8 days from the time a deer was killed in November 2005. In 2003, results were available in 26.6 days.

Hunters who submit deer for CWD testing typically want test results before they eat their deer. To assist during the peak workload period from late November through mid-January, DNR plans to provide 2.0 FTE staff to assist the Diagnostic Laboratory with CWD testing.

The Diagnostic Laboratory also operates a chemical tissue digester to dispose of CWD-positive carcasses and other deer testing remains. The tissue digester destroys prions, which are believed to be the cause of CWD. In FY 2005-06, the tissue digester disposed of 370,768 pounds of deer tissue, of which 93.9 percent was from DNR's surveillance program. The remainder was from testing farm-raised deer.

Potential Human Health Risks

DHFS assesses potential human health risks of CWD by monitoring cases of related human diseases, establishing a registry of people known to have consumed venison from CWD-infected deer, and informing the public of potential risks associated with CWD. To date, there is no evidence to suggest that eating CWD-infected venison can lead to human disease. However, because a similar disease in cows has been linked to human illness, DHFS, the World Health Organization, and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advise people not to consume any venison from CWD-infected deer as a precautionary measure.

Future Considerations

Compared to other states in which CWD has been identified, Wisconsin has taken an aggressive approach to combating the disease. That approach has also been more costly, but it has not been effective to date. We therefore highlight three alternative approaches for consideration by DNR and the Legislature: making no changes; increasing efforts, which would likely increase program costs; or reducing or eliminating some CWD-related activities.

Recommendations

Our report includes a recommendation for the Diagnostic Laboratory and DNR to:

- ☑ report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by April 15, 2007, on the time required to notify hunters of CWD test results for the 2006 hunting season (*p. 73*).

We also recommend that DNR, in consultation with DATCP, DHFS, and the Diagnostic Laboratory:

- ☑ report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by April 15, 2007, on:
 - how recent changes in hunting rules in the CWD zones affected the number of deer taken from these zones during the 2006 hunting season;
 - the number of CWD-positive deer killed as a result of DNR sharpshooting and trapping efforts during the 2006 hunting season;
 - whether testing performed on deer from the 2006 hunting season indicates any changes in the spread of CWD;
 - plans to improve communication with hunters; and
 - strategies that will be employed to reduce CWD-related costs (*p. 90*).

■ ■ ■ ■





WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE

Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Committee Co-Chairs:
State Senator Carol Roessler
State Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz

For Immediate Release

November 16, 2006

For More Information Contact:

Senator Carol Roessler
Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz

(608) 266-5300

(608) 266-3796

Auditors Find Efforts to Eradicate CWD Ineffective

(Madison) Today, the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) released an evaluation of the state's efforts to combat chronic wasting disease (CWD). Since CWD was first identified among Wisconsin's free-ranging deer in February 2002, four state agencies have spent \$32.3 million to combat the disease and monitor its spread. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which accounted for 82.9 percent of all expenditures, has been the lead agency in the effort to fight the spread of CWD.

Compared to other states in which CWD has been identified, Wisconsin has taken an aggressive approach to addressing the disease. However, LAB found that efforts to eradicate CWD have not been effective. In CWD zones, the number of deer killed declined from 23.1 per square mile during the 2003 hunting season to 17.4 per square mile during the 2005 hunting season. The CWD infection rate in the 210-square-mile core area used by DNR to monitor infection rates has also not declined. The estimated number of deer in CWD zones has increased from a post-hunt population of 26.4 deer per square mile in 2002 to 38.3 deer per square mile in 2005.

"Given the importance of deer hunting to our state's economy, we must ensure that we address the disease effectively," stated _____. "The audit notes that deer hunting license sales have not returned to pre-CWD levels, which makes the implementation of an effective overall CWD strategy even more critical."

The Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, which is located at UW-Madison, has performed an increasing number of tests for CWD during the nine-day regular gun hunting season. The audit confirmed that hunters who have their deer tested are waiting longer for results. On average, test results were not available until 51.8 days from the time a deer was killed in November 2005. In 2003, results were available in 26.6 days.

"Hunters are our most important partners in the fight against CWD," stated _____. "As we strive to improve the outcomes from our efforts to combat the disease, we must provide timely test results to our hunters." The audit notes that from late November through mid-January, DNR plans to provide 2.0 full-time-equivalent staff to assist the Diagnostic Laboratory with CWD testing.

Given that Wisconsin's aggressive approach to CWD has been more costly than less-aggressive approaches in other states, LAB outlines alternative options for consideration by DNR and the Legislature. The audit calls for four state agencies to report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee in April 2007 with strategies that will be employed to reduce CWD-related costs.

Copies of the audit may be obtained from the Legislative Audit Bureau's Web site at www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab or by calling (608) 266-2818 to request a copy of report 06-13.

SENATOR ROESSLER
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4/5/06 - scope hearing

DNR - Chronic Wasting Disease

(1)

LAP

MM: Game farms?

↳ if approve

DNR

~~MM~~ - written testimony / brochure

Sen. Schultz / Rep. Freeze / Lee Farming (sp?)

- Sen. Schultz - fact has disappeared, DNR worn out, need a comprehensive look at program - long-time hunters & DNR supporters who are angry. - St. Patrick's Day evening DNR hearing on CWD - not well publicized either
- Lee - Reiterate Sen. Schultz's comments
 - written a number of articles on CWD (CR asked for copies)
 - Survey from
 - DNR baiting & hunting overnight - Don't like this!
Contradicts science to hunt over bait
 - sharp shooter program has gone underground
 - Ag tags - trophy hunters go there (DNR) to get what others can't
 - reallocation of DNR dollars from other programs to CWD program
 - acres private property unable to hunt on
- Freeze - whole dist. in CWD zone
 - proposed \$1.2M to spend on sharp shooters & an incinerating device for deer carcasses
 - DNR far under goals & spending more than orig. plan
 - modeling based on CO - suppose to but don't think they (DNR) is
 - what is happening to the farms?

reese

- Grand Junction column in CO? - is it true?

Schultz - DNR website - no substantive info on what they're doing / how it is working

David Miller

.5% sales tax = ? revenue - Faith Russell approx \$435-6M

? Comp time policy in legis?

at
KSB