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**STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR WAYNE ALLARD
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE AND WATER
HEARING ON CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE**
Calls for federal funding, implementation of coordinating plan

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) made the following statement Tuesday at a meeting of the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee’s Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Water:

“In 1967, one year before I received my Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, scientists just a few miles up the road were grappling with a strange new ‘wasting’ disease that had decimated their deer population. The discovery launched researchers on the foothills campus into the field of prion research, a heretofore-unknown field of science about which, even today, little is known. Three decades later, tragically, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was discovered outside the fences of the CSU campus, in both wild and captive cervid populations.

“As scientists worked to unravel the mystery of the folded protein, several states’ departments of resources and agriculture scrambled to get a handle on the spread of the disease. For agriculture, CWD posed difficult problems for the captive deer and elk farming industry. For resource managers, the disease threatened grave consequences for the wild cervid population as well as for communities across the United States whose economies depend on deer and elk hunting. In an all-out attack against the disease, tens of thousands of animals were destroyed. In the meantime, state wildlife management budgets were quickly depleted as the demands of testing and eradication siphoned off millions of un-budgeted dollars. A perfect example: in just two years in Colorado, CWD funding jumped from \$700,000 to \$4 million.

“While there was never any doubt that the states retained undisputed primacy over wildlife, the economic and scientific demands forced them to turn to the federal government for assistance. The financial strain of management efforts coupled with the unique scientific demands assure a limited role for the federal government. Through the Department of Agriculture emergency powers, millions of dollars were provided for culling and indemnification. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Agriculture Research Service and the U.S. Geological Service, reacted to the need for CWD research and management funding through their yearly budget processes.

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“As the level of involvement at Interior and Agriculture increased, it became quite clear that a coordinating plan was needed to prevent duplication of services and research, improve communication and streamline federal efforts. A task force convened and a plan emerged. Unfortunately, the plan has never been finalized and no reason has been provided as to why it has never received final approval. The plan contained funding estimates and needs. To date, despite Congressional mandates, the plan remains on the shelf collecting dust. Nor have the agencies presented specific reasons to Congress that the efforts they are undertaking (and the funding they are requesting) are in line with the plan.

“Without a funding plan from the federal government – especially one that included grants for CWD research, monitoring and control - the states continued to suffer financially. In two separate hearings before the House Resources Committee, state officials made it very clear that additional resources were needed, regardless of the plan’s status. As a result, I, along with Senators Campbell, Crapo and Feingold, and several other colleagues, introduced S. 1036 and S. 1366. S. 1036 deals with the layers of federal CWD responsibility and S. 1366 deals with state and tribal funding for research, monitoring and eradication of the disease.

“During this morning’s testimony I will be listening for ways to improve S. 1366 so that we can put in place a reliable funding mechanism that will allow the states an opportunity to secure the funding they need, while I hope to prevent a parade of Congressional earmarks for CWD through the appropriations process. I also believe S. 1366 is important because without it, there is no incentive to keep money dedicated to Chronic Wasting Disease. The states desperately need assistance and we have waited far long enough to provide them with it.

“This hearing is vitally important because of the impact CWD has on the economy. Colorado’s resource-based western slope is heavily dependant on deer and elk hunting, a \$599 million industry in the region. If Chronic Wasting Disease were to become endemic, it could create severe problems for game management and producers on a nationwide scale, potentially costing the U.S. \$100 billion, according to Andrew Seidl, an associate professor at Colorado State University. A strong, coordinated front against the disease will prevent a devastating blow to wildlife and the economy.”

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