



American Veterinary Medical Association Governmental Relations Division

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S. 357 Wildlife Disease Emergency Act

AVMA Position: Support

Summary:

Introduced by Senator Frank Lautenberg (NJ), S. 357 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to declare a wildlife disease emergency and to coordinate rapid response to those emergencies. Establishes in the Treasury a Wildlife Disease Emergency Fund. Directs the Secretary of the Interior to establish a Wildlife Disease Committee to assist in increasing the level of preparedness needed to address emerging wildlife diseases.

Background:

- This bill was sparked by the rapid emergence and spread of White-Nose Syndrome, a disease devastating bat populations across the United States.
- A 2010 GAO Report highlighted the need for improved collaboration among agencies involved in wildlife disease emergency planning and response (GAO-11-9).
- The Department of Interior (DOI) operates within that National Incident Management System and supports the National Response Framework.

Justification:

- Effective wildlife disease emergency planning and responses will take concerted multi-agency efforts at local, state, federal, and potentially international levels. This legislation is an important step to codifying the DOI's important lead federal role in wildlife disease emergencies.
- This bill establishes an organized means for the collaborative preparedness and emergency response efforts.
- Establishing greater support and funding for emergent and/or devastating wildlife diseases will help protect important species, support conservation, and could, in turn, prevent negative effects on livestock and human health.

Current Status:

- Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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