

ANALYSIS

Item 79: Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Wild Cervid Wasting Disease Management

Analyst: April McDonald

Request: Approve, retroactively, the submission of a federal grant application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services in the amount of \$372,434 for response to wild cervid chronic wasting disease; and increase Federal Funds expenditure limitation by \$277,000 for grant expenditures in the 2021-23 biennium.

Analysis: Wild Cervid Wasting Disease (CWD) is an infectious, degenerative disease of animals in the Cervidae family (elk, deer, and moose, etc.) that causes brain cells to die, ultimately leading to the death of the infected animal. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) seeks retroactive approval to submit a federal grant application to APHIS Wildlife Services for further development and implementation of CWD surveillance, testing, management and response activities, including evaluation of techniques and strategies to prevent or control CWD in wild cervids. This federal grant opportunity does not require a state match.

The Department has applied for two cooperative agreement opportunities. The first, titled “Evaluating the Genetic Susceptibility of Oregon Cervids to Chronic Wasting Disease,” provides \$125,173 to sequence the genes of over 700 cervid samples from across the state. Researchers from the University of Illinois would process the samples and assess the diversity and geographic frequency of the genetic variants of interest to estimate regional genetic vulnerability of Oregon cervids. If successful in receiving funds, the collaborative work will be sub-awarded to University of Illinois.

The second request, titled “Wild Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Research Activities,” provides \$247,261 to increase the agency’s efforts in prevention, early detection and mitigation of CWD in Oregon. The focus of this effort includes increasing staff capacity through a one-year job rotation intended to coordinate statewide CWD sample collection, thus improving detection and response. ODFW also plans to develop an Oregon-based rapid testing and reporting system, and provide educational outreach materials and programs.

The Department notified the Legislature of its intent to apply for this funding on June 15, 2022, which was after the agency’s submission of the grant application on June 7, 2022. ODFW acknowledged this oversight in its 10-day notification letter and has committed to adherence to the legislative process in the future. ODFW received award notification from USDA on August 15, 2022 with the stipulation that all funds must be spent by September 30, 2023. ODFW seeks \$277,000 Federal Funds expenditure limitation for 2021-23 and anticipates returning to the Legislature during the 2023 legislative session to request the remaining balance for the 2023-25 budget.

Recommendation: The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Emergency Board approve, retroactively, the submission of a federal grant application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the amount of \$372,434 for response to wild cervid chronic wasting disease, and increase Federal Funds expenditure limitation by \$277,000 for grant expenditures by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in the 2021-23 biennium.

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Department of Fish and Wildlife
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Request: Retroactive authorization to apply for a federal grant of \$372,434 from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for Wild Cervid Wasting Disease Management. Increase Federal Funds expenditure limitation by \$277,000.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Discussion: Cervid Wasting Disease is a prion disease affecting large, hooved, antler-bearing mammals, such as deer and elk. As a prion disease, the brain of the animal is slowly destroyed until the animal expires through secondary causes, such as aspiration pneumonia. Cervid Wasting Disease has the potential to cross the human-wildlife barrier and as such, is monitored and controlled to minimize public health concerns.

USDA has made grants available for the control and prevention of Cervid Wasting Disease to state departments and federally recognized Tribal governments through the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Wildlife Services. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has proposed to use the grant funds for two activities; (1) to complete genetic sequencing activities in cooperation with the University of Illinois, and (2) to increase detection and prevention activities through the funding of a limited duration position that would increase sample collection efforts. The grant application was approved on August 15, 2022 and must be expended by September 30, 2023.

Legal Reference: Increase the Federal Funds expenditure limitation established by chapter 679, section 4(2), Oregon Laws 2021, for the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wildlife Division, by \$277,000 for the 2021-23 biennium.



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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August 19, 2022

The Honorable Senator Peter Courtney, President of the Senate
The Honorable Representative Dan Rayfield, Speaker of the House
900 Court Street NE
H-178 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301



Dear Senator Courtney and Representative Rayfield:

Nature of the Request

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) requests retroactive approval to submit a federal grant application in the amount of \$372,434 to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS) to further develop and implement wild cervid chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance, testing, management, and response activities.

ODFW also requests \$277,000 federal funds expenditure limitation for the agency's 2021-23 biennium budget to expend grant funding.

Background

This federal funding opportunity is made available through the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS) and is available to state departments and Federally recognized Tribal governments to further develop and implement wild cervid chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance, testing, management, and response activities, including further development and evaluation of techniques and strategies to prevent or control CWD in wild cervids. This federal grant opportunity does not require state match for the federal funds.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has applied for two cooperative agreement opportunities. The first request, "Evaluating the genetic susceptibility of Oregon cervids to chronic wasting disease," totals \$125,173 of federal funds. With CWD reaching the border of Oregon, researchers at University of Illinois will sequence the prion protein gene from over 700 cervid samples across the state to assess the diversity and geographic frequencies of prion protein variants. This sequencing information will be used to estimate regional genetic vulnerability of Oregon cervids (mule deer, black-tailed deer, Columbian white-tailed deer, and Roosevelt and Rocky Mountain elk) as uninfected populations about to face an outbreak of CWD. If successful in receiving funds, the collaborative work will be sub-awarded to University of Illinois.

The second request, "Wild Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease Management and Research Activities," totals \$247,261 of federal funding. The proposed project aim is to increase all facets of preventative agency actions to provide early detection and avoid incursion of CWD into Oregon through four key objectives funded under this grant opportunity. The focus of this effort involves increasing capacity for CWD detection and response, sample collection training programs, developing an Oregon-based rapid testing and reporting system, and providing educational outreach materials and programs. This request funds a one-year job rotation position to coordinate statewide work for sample collection with field staff at check stations and by taxidermy businesses leading to significant (100-200%) sample size increases needed for effective detection, response and control. Improved carcass collection and disposal as part of sample collection efforts will facilitate disease management actions; education and outreach will align the knowledge of the public and stakeholders with agency management actions.

Agency Action

ODFW's grant application was approved; the agency received notification from the US Department of Agriculture August 15, 2022. Funds will need to be spent by September 30, 2023. ODFW anticipates making a future request for additional federal funds expenditure limitation for its 2023-25 biennium budget to expend remaining grant funds.

Action Requested

ODFW requests retroactive approval to submit a federal grant application in the amount of \$372,434 to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS). ODFW also requests \$277,000 federal funds expenditure limitation for the agency's 2021-23 biennium budget.

Legislation Affected

Oregon Laws 2021, Chapter 679, Section 4(2) Wildlife Division

Sincerely,



Curtis E. Melcher
Director