

OT- Schumer (D-NY) urges action to quell deer disease

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- *From:* "Chuck" <chuckadams05@xxxxxxx>
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Schumer urges action to quell deer disease

WASHINGTON — A deadly deer disease could cost upstate New York's hunting industry millions unless the federal government steps in quickly, Sen. Chuck Schumer warned Wednesday.

Seven deer in Oneida County recently tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease, a fatal illness of the brain and nervous system that afflicts deer and elk.

So far, there is no evidence that humans can catch the disease.

But an outbreak could threaten the state's \$107 million hunting industry by scaring away deer hunters, who bring revenue to rural counties by staying in local lodges and eating at restaurants.

An outbreak of the disease in Wisconsin in 2002 was followed by a 12 percent drop in hunting license applications in that state, the senator said. If a similar drop occurs in New York, Schumer estimated the annual economic losses could be: \$23 million in the Southern Tier, \$20 million in the Rochester/Finger Lakes region, \$20 million in the Hudson Valley and \$7 million in central New York.

"In New York state, big game is big business," said Schumer, D-N.Y. "Hunting is more than just recreation. It's a way of life for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers."

The total New York deer population is estimated at more than 1 million, Schumer said.

About 684,000 deer hunting licenses were issued in 2003. Licensed hunters killed 253,000 deer in 2003 and 208,000 in 2004.

Schumer is calling on federal agriculture and public health officials to take five steps as soon as possible to try to contain the disease. He also plans to co-sponsor a bipartisan bill later this year with Wisconsin and Wyoming senators that would require federal officials to carry out the steps. They are:

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New York to manage the outbreak.

Increase funding for research to learn more about how the disease is transmitted between animals and between species.

Elevate the Cornell Diagnostic Laboratory in Ithaca to a premier nationwide testing facility for the disease. Currently, most animal testing is done in Ames, Iowa. But specialists who work with Chronic Wasting Disease believe a backup lab is necessary, Schumer said.

Require testing of all deer in areas where contaminated animals have been found. Schumer advocates that all deer in and around Oneida County that are killed by hunters or in traffic accidents be given one of the so-called "rapid tests" that can give results within days.

Establish a nationwide standard for control and eradication of Chronic Wasting Disease. Currently, methods of controlling the disease vary from state to state.

The plan calls to elevate the Cornell Diagnostic Laboratory in Ithaca to a premier nationwide testing facility for the disease. Currently, most animal testing is done in Ames, Iowa.

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- ***Follow-Ups:***

- ◆ ***Re: OT– Schumer (D–NY) urges action to quell deer disease***

- ◇ *From:* kathleen

- ◆ ***Re: OT– Schumer (D–NY) urges action to quell deer disease***

- ◇ *From:* zipzip

- Prev by Date: ***OT– Power of the Liberal Press kills people***

- Next by Date: ***OT– The Politics of Cowardice***

- Previous by thread: ***OT– Power of the Liberal Press kills people***

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