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Comments: Thank you for your work and efforts to help preserve a healthy population of elk for the benefit of Wyomingites and our tourist industry.

I wish to make several observations regarding the Cook et. al.'s report "Evaluating Management Alternatives for Wyoming Elk Feedgrounds in Consideration of Chronic Wasting Disease" (Open-File Report 2023-1015, Version 2.0, November 2023)

- 1)With a intermediate understanding of statistics, I was unconvinced by the statistical significance of any 20-year outcome of the three scenarios presented. There appears to be many assumptions with a sufficient degree of uncertainty that propagate through each model yielding a non-material difference in projected population size (save for the Piney herd, perhaps).
- 2)Regarding the impact to mule deer and moose populations, given the overlap in territory in non-winter months, and the reduction in available nutrients during the winter months for all three species, it's difficult to agree with the conclusions that there is negligible impact to moose and mule deer with increased competition from elk for nutrients.
- 3)Regarding the impact of not feeding herbivores during heavy snowfall/long winter-season years: we have very strong evidence - as recent as the 2022-2023 winter - of the severity of impact to herbivore populations in the absence of sufficient nutrient depots. Is it a leap to assume that elk would have not suffered significant population declines, similar to the mule deer and pronghorn populations?
- 4)Regarding the impact of heavy snowfall/long winter-season years on the intrusion of elk on private property, the report appears to conclude the impact would be negligible. I challenge this conclusion, given the presence of elk on my and neighboring properties (not ranches) during the 2022-2023 season. The damage and nuisance elk herds can inflict on private property is significant (plausibly more than the dollar value increase calculated in the no feeding scenario in the report)
- 5)CWD does not appear to be causing imminent herd collapse in any species in which it is found. Did not one extreme winter cause more damage to unfed species than 20 years of CWD? I hold out hope for improved biological understanding of CWD and the development of high-quality preventative interventions. We should be dedicating significant resources to such research.

I urge the panel to seriously consider whether the evidence for discontinuing winter feeding will redound to the benefit of all herbivores, the communities nearby, and the overall value of wildlife to the economy of Wyoming. While not foreseen with complicated statistical models, the law of unintended consequences has long and distinguished record against weakly justified interventions.