

February 26, 2021

Minnesota Deer farmers Assn.

President Rich Meech

Representative Mike Sundin

Chair House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee

Re: HF 1137

Representative Sundin and Committee members,

The Minnesota Deer Farmers Association is opposed to HF 1137 which would increase the Board of Animal Health from five to nine members, remove Senate oversight and also change the credentials which have traditionally been used to select Board members.

Traditionally, and statutorily, BAH Board members have been Livestock producers or practicing Veterinarians. This bill would remove those criteria and may dilute the practical expertise of the Board as a result. Over the years, the BAH has relied on this expertise which has allowed it to move swiftly and decisively in their response to emerging livestock issues. We also have grave concerns with the removal of the Senate as the body that oversees the process and confirms members. This oversight is necessary to insure that we have an open and collaborative process when selecting members for the Board.

The current system has worked very well in the past and has provided a qualified pool from which Board members have been selected. Given that there have not been any deficiencies or concerns with the current Board and its makeup, we view this bill as a solution looking for a problem. In our opinion, the proposed changes are not needed, remove critical legislative oversight, remove practical expertise within the board and add additional limitations when selecting the most qualified Board members available.

Sincerely,
Rich Meech
President, Minnesota Deer Farmers Association