



Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association

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April 23, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

Contained in the House Agriculture Omnibus bill is a provision proposing changes to the Minnesota Board of Animal Health (Board). First, we truly believe that the Board has operated effectively over the years in addressing both companion animal and production animal health matters. However, we are agreeable to changes that would enhance the number of veterinarians serving on the board. The proposed change specifically designates that this additional veterinarian be a small animal veterinarian. Our preference would be that the language either designate the type of veterinarian for all the positions (such as one small animal, one large animal, and one at large veterinarian), or just indicate that they be licensed practicing veterinarians (without designating type of veterinarian) as is the current language. In addition, we would like to see the language reinstated that appointments be “with the advice and consent of the senate”. Having the senate involved with appointments provides for an important “checks and balance” step in this process.

We would also like to see maintained the Board’s ability to decide on its executive director who serves for a one year term. The Board works closely with this individual and we believe they are in the best position to determine its leaders coupled with the ongoing abilities and skills needed to carry out the Board’s mission. When avian flu sprung up and rapidly moved through our turkey farms in western Minnesota, it was critical that the Board of Animal Health board and its executive director work closely and quickly together in its response. State and federal authorities together with the state’s turkey industry applauded the Board for its effective and prompt handling of that crisis. Consequently, the Board has a proven template in place for addressing any future disease outbreaks.

Finally, we ask that the Board continue to have adequate funds to do its vital work in overseeing the health and welfare of the many companion and production animals in this state.

Thank you for consideration of the above comments.

Sincerely,

Connie Sillerud

Connie Sillerud
President