

MINNESOTA DEER HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

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BUILDING OUR HUNTING & CONSERVATION LEGACY THROUGH HABITAT, EDUCATION & ADVOCACY.

March 14, 2022

Rep. Rick Hansen

Chair

Minnesota House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Written Testimony for Committee Hearing on March 15, 2022

Dear Chair Hansen:

I am writing today on behalf of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association (MDHA) to submit testimony on several bills and amendments that will be heard in Committee on March 15, 2022. MDHA has been actively working to protect Minnesota's wild deer herd since its founding in 1980 and recently re-affirmed its position on a number of farmed cervid policy issues at its annual meeting on February 26, 2022. I submit this testimony to set forth the positions that MDHA adopted at its annual meeting.

Antemortem Testing of Farmed Cervids

MDHA supports a requirement that all farmed cervids in Minnesota be tested annually for chronic wasting disease (CWD) once an antemortem test is approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). If a farmed cervid tests positive for CWD, a second antemortem test shall be performed. If the second test is positive, the owner must have the animal destroyed and tested for CWD using a postmortem test approved by the Board of Animal Health. If the postmortem test is positive, the owner must depopulate the cervids on the premises as required by Minnesota law.

Importation Ban

MDHA supports a requirement that a person must not import cervids from any herd originating from a state or province where CWD has been detected in either farmed or wild cervids. For states and provinces where CWD has not been detected, if there is an antemortem test for CWD validated by USDA, a person may only import cervids that have tested negative immediately prior to importation.

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Moratorium on New Cervid Farm Registrations

MDHA supports legislation stating that the Board of Animal Health must not approve any new registrations for farmed cervids. MDHA would not oppose a person holding a valid registration from selling or transferring the person's herd and registration to a family member.

Voluntary Buyout of Registered Operations

MDHA supports appropriating funds from the general fund to offer a buyout payment to the owners of farmed cervids registered under Minnesota Statutes, section 35.155. The State of Minnesota must establish buyout payment amounts and criteria. Under no circumstances does MDHA support the use of deer license revenues or Game and Fish funds for this voluntary buyout.

MDHA appreciates having the opportunity to comment on these bills and amendments and looks forward to continuing to participate in this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Craig L. Engwall".

Craig L. Engwall
MDHA Executive Director



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2/21/2022

Rep. Rob Ecklund
409 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: HF2814 (Ecklund) and RT-QuIC

Dear Rep. Ecklund:

I am writing to express Wildlife Research Center's support for and confidence in RT-QuIC testing.

A family business based in Ramsey, Minnesota, Wildlife Research Center is an industry leader in Urine-Based Scent and Scent Elimination products used by deer hunters across the state and country.

Wildlife Research Center shares the concerns of deer hunters and public policy officials about the potential CWD contamination of Minnesota's wild deer herd. Recognizing the adverse effects of CWD on wild deer herds, Wildlife Research Center has actively engaged in science-based efforts to prevent the spread of CWD. As a family owned business dependent on a vibrant and healthy wild deer herd, and as avid hunters ourselves, we consider it our responsibility to do so.

More than half a decade ago, with the help of the Archery Trade Association, hunting scent industry leaders worked with Wildlife Agencies, Wildlife Disease Experts and industry experts, to develop a set of rigorous standards and strict biosecurity measures to protect the facilities where the urine in our scent products comes from, providing safe sources of urine-based scent products. These standards go above and beyond state and federal regulations. The result was the establishment of the Deer Protection Program (DPP).

Program compliance is measured by verification of required paperwork and inspection reports completed by 3rd party accredited veterinarians. Additional facility inspections may be conducted to ensure compliance. Only upon verification of compliance of all DPP measures is a participant certified and allowed to use the DPP checkmark certification trademark logo on their packaging.



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The Deer Protection Program is built on top of the USDA Herd Certification Program and, in addition to federal and state- approved CWD program guidelines, the Program:

- I. prohibits urine production facilities from importing live cervids;
- II. requires that all cervids exported from the facility be tested for chronic wasting disease upon death;
- III. mandates annual inspections by an accredited veterinarian, including inspection of the herd, facilities and applicable records; and
- IV. specifies construction and maintenance of an 8-foot or higher perimeter fence to protect the facility and, in CWD zones, a double perimeter fence to prevent direct contact between captive and wild cervids.

CWD has never been found in a Deer Protection Program collection facility.

In further effort to ensure safe and responsible hunting scent products, industry leaders in 2019 began to take yet another step and began RT-QuIC testing every lot of urine used in these products. Since then, it has become yet another requirement of the Deer Protection Program.

RT-QuIC testing is used as a final conformation to ensure that the deer urine in these products poses no risk to wildlife.

Independent testing of each lot of deer urine is performed prior to distribution of any DPP urine product. No urine from DPP facilities has tested positive for CWD which is congruent with the current CWD free status of the DPP deer herds providing urine to the scent industry.

RT-QuIC is a reliable test to determine if prions are present in urine and many other samples as well. RT-QuIC testing is the next generation of CWD tests and is being used widely in the veterinary diagnostic world to detect CWD. Several universities and states are exploring Rt-QuIC as a method for live animal testing and surveillance, and more than 40 peer reviewed papers have confirmed the validity of RT-QuIC as a detection assay for prion diseases like CWD.

RT-QuIC testing is currently not a USDA approved test for CWD. However, the USDA and multiple states have turned to RT-QuIC testing for accurate and reliable answers about the CWD status of many sample types.

The USDA is currently in the process of a pilot study to also determine the effectiveness of RT-QuIC as a live animal test for CWD. Multiple states are currently interested or pushing for the adoption of RT-QuIC as a live animal test for CWD. We anticipate this will happen relatively soon.



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Understanding the threat that CWD poses to wild deer herds, WRC and other industry leaders, as business owners and hunters that depend on a healthy, vibrant deer population appreciate the efforts that our state legislators and officials are putting into combatting Chronic Wasting Disease.

Thank you for this opportunity to share with legislators, regulators, hunters, and the general public what Wildlife Research Center and other industry leaders are doing to protect wild deer.

Sincerely,

Sam Burgeson, President
Wildlife Research Center

March 15, 2022

Chair Hansen and Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to again submit comments on Rep. Ecklund's HF 2814.

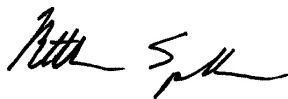
Minnesota Realtors® submitted written testimony for the March 1, 2022 House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee, however, we wanted to remind committee members of our concerns with provisions found on page 2, lines 2-8, which would require soil testing for evidence of chronic wasting disease (CWD) prior to the sale or transfer of farmed Cervidae properties.

At the February 14, 2022 House Agriculture Finance Committee hearing on HF 2814, members heard testimony indicating that testing soil for CWD is "extremely problematic." Requiring inconsistent or unreliable soil testing prior to the sale or transfer of property could interfere with the property owner's fundamental property right of disposition.

We recommend striking this provision from the bill and encourage collaboration with all stakeholders regarding how best to ensure current and future owners understand the requirements associated with detection of CWD on a farmed Cervidae premises, while also avoiding the creation of impractical or unnecessary barriers associated with the sale or transfer of property.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments on this bill.

Sincerely,



Matt Spellman
Director, Governmental Affairs
Minnesota Realtors®