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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of CENSHARE to express support for House File 208 and Senate File 73, the Companion Animal Board bill.

The mission of CENSHARE is to promote collaborative and transdisciplinary research across the areas of veterinary medicine, public health, medicine and social sciences. As a center within the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, CENSHARE studies and quantifies the human-animal bond and its impact on human health.

We see a growing need for companion animals and their families throughout Minnesota. The US population is expected to grow by 8% between 2015 and 2025, but those between the ages of 70 and 84 will increase by 50%. As demographics, family units and longevity change, companion animals will play a crucial role in public health, including reduction in loneliness, isolation and depression while contributing to improved dietary quality and self-care. Companion animals are associated with declines in prescription drug use, better sleep and fewer health problems, as well as establishing routines, a sense of purpose, and unconditional love.

Establishment of a Companion Animal Board is essential to improved protection and understanding of these family members in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and would allow the State of Minnesota to more effectively plan for and respond to issues specific to companion animals and those who care for these animals.

We fully support this Board as it will have the necessary mission, knowledge, and expertise to lead discussions, share information and resources, and educate the public—benefitting our research center and others as well as promoting the welfare of people and their companion animals.

CENSHARE encourages you to support House File 208 and Senate File 73.

Sincerely,



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Director, Center to Study Human-Animal Relationships and Environments (CENSHARE)  
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cc: Representative Esther Agbaje  
Senator Bobby Joe Champion

