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February 21, 2023

Rep. Samantha Vang, Chair of the House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee

RE: RT-QuIC and CWD

Dear Chair Vang and Committee Members:

I am writing to express Wildlife Research Center's support for, and our use of 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



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DPP measures is a participant certified and allowed to use the DPP checkmark certification trademark logo on their packaging.

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 (Real-time quaking-induced conversion) testing every lot of urine used in these products. Since then, it has become yet another requirement of the Deer Protection Program (DPP).

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

Independent lab 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.

The laboratory CWD Evolutions LLC that RT-QuIC tests our products has recently partnered with VMRD Veterinary Medical Research & Development to commercialize a USDA-licensed RT-QuIC laboratory test. (see attached press release)



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Wildlife Research Center has strongly supported for many years and continues to support the use of RT-QuIC testing in the fight against CWD.

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