

April 8, 2024

Chair Hawj and Members of the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for SF 4897.

I support the recommendations in the "Report on Feral Pigs and Farmed Mink" prepared by the Department of Natural Resources.

Current licensing and registration requirements for fur farms in Minnesota are inadequate to protect public health.

Last month, goats on a farm in Stevens County, Minnesota tested positive for avian influenza. Avian influenza was recently confirmed in dairy cows in several states, and a worker at one of the farms also tested positive for the virus. The transmission of avian influenza from farm animals to humans is a worrisome development. There have been numerous avian influenza outbreaks among commercially farmed foxes and mink in Europe, and there is a potential for disease transmission between mink, other animals, and humans, here in Minnesota.

SF 4897 would require disease testing and reporting by fur farms in Minnesota, in addition to developing standards for the containment of mink. These steps are vital for the prevention and control of infectious diseases.

Thank you,

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