



January 29, 2025

Co-Chair Aric Putnam
Co-Chair Torrey N. Westrom
Senate Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee
95 University Ave W
Minnesota Senate Bldg
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chairs Putnam and Westrom, and members of the committee,

Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) appreciates the opportunity to share written testimony on behalf of our 31,000 family farm and ranch members. Thank you for the chance to submit brief comments in support of Senator Wesenberg's SF 553 and SF 659, both regarding Cervidae farms.

SF 553 seeks to remove the "physical contact" requirement for Cervidae farms. Cervidae farmers have generally viewed this provision as requiring double-fencing. Many farms have struggled with this requirement. With the current cost of fencing and those costs continually rising, this requirement could put some out of business. It is in the best interest of Cervidae farmers to do everything they can to prevent the spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD), as the future of their farms depends on controlling this disease. Removing this onerous requirement and working cooperatively with Cervidae farmers to find other methods of stopping CWD would result in greater progress and higher compliance.

SF 659 would fully return authority over Cervidae farms from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to the Board of Animal Health (BAH). MFBF strongly supports the Board of Animal Health and their work on behalf of Minnesota farmers and livestock. DNR jurisdiction over any livestock, including farmed Cervidae, sets a concerning precedent. While DNR has expertise in regulating wildlife, they lack experience and knowledge in livestock and animal agriculture. Fully returning the regulation of Cervidae farms to BAH would reverse this precedent and ensure that jurisdictional lines over livestock are not blurred.

Again, thank you for allowing MFBF to comment on SF 553 and SF 659. We thank the Committee for hearing these bills and ask for your support.

Sincerely,

Dan Glessing, President
Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation

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