

May 9, 2022

Re: Conference Committee opposition to SF 4062, Article 3, House version

Chairs Ingebrigtsen and Hansen,

The Minnesota Deer farmers Association stands in strong opposition to all provisions contained in Article 3 of the House version of SF 4062 pertaining to Farmed Cervidae. These provisions, either in part or in whole, would either significantly damage or completely destroy the farmed whitetail industry. Many of these provisions pose significant challenges to personal property rights and also contain serious issues with their feasibility, workability and efficacy. Here are just a few items for the Committee to consider:

1. Some of the provisions in Article 3 require the use of RTQuiC for either testing live farmed cervid or for testing soil. RTQuiC is clearly a technology in development, and nowhere near being ready to be used on a large scale. We are hopeful that this test will be viable in the future but for now it is not. Furthermore, RTQuiC is not USDA approved for use in live animals and the USDA has sent a very strongly worded letter to the University of Minnesota asking them not to use it. RTQuiC pioneer and expert Dr Davin Henderson has testified in the House Environment committee that this technology is not reliable for testing soil and the requirement that it be used for this purpose in this bill is not workable.
2. Many of the items within Article 3 have been put forward for several years. Given our logical and fact based arguments against these provisions, I will not go into them here. One item that is new is the proposed ban on the importation of semen from out of state. With regard to this provision, please consider the following:
  - A. In the USDA Standards program, there is no known transfer of CWD through semen
  - B. A semen importation ban would significantly damage a farmer's ability to genetically diversify and improve their herd.
  - C. There is no science to prove that CWD has been transferred by importing semen
  - D. Importation of semen has enormous value to farmers who are improving their herd's resistance to CWD through selective breeding by incorporating genetic material from animals with known CWD resistant markers.
  - E. An importation ban would do nothing to stop the spread of CWD and is needlessly damaging to deer farmers.
  - F. Deer farmers are significantly ahead of wildlife biologists in the development of technology that genetically improves resistance to CWD by sequencing and breeding for known CWD resistant markers.
  - G. Rather than working to drive deer farmers out of business, we should be partnering with them to harness their expertise in creating a genetically resistant wild deer herd.

Sincerely Scott Fier

President Minnesota Deer Farmers Association.