



February 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Minnesota Horse Welfare Coalition (MHWC) to express support for House File 208 and Senate File 73, the Companion Animal Board.

MHWC is an organization working to prevent equine neglect, abandonment, and abuse. The Coalition is comprised of teams dedicated to providing assistance to equines through our castration program, the Minnesota Hay Bank, assisting with temporary foster care, veterinary assistance, and euthanasia.

In our work, we see firsthand the growing needs of horses and their owners throughout Minnesota. We fully support the establishment of the Companion Animal Board, which will provide much-needed expertise with these animals and those who care for them. This type of state agency is long overdue.

The Companion Animal Board can work collaboratively with public, private and nonprofit sectors to lead discussions, help define community problems and needs, and coordinate with entities throughout Minnesota to promote the delivery of services statewide. For MHWC and the needs of equines, these issues can include data collection, such as how many horses exist in Minnesota, the availability and distribution of hay and nutrition especially in times of crisis or extreme weather, and qualified shelter or veterinary care as defined by community.

Nonprofits alone cannot assume these duties. Animal welfare is a statewide issue. It is time for Minnesota to establish the Companion Animal Board to provide leadership, outreach, communication, and coordination of services and resources for equines and other companion animals.

As with other companion animals, the equine industry continues to grow. Creation of the Minnesota Companion Animal Board with specific focus and expertise in companion animal issues is imperative.

We urge you to support House File 208 and Senate File 73.

Sincerely,

Stacy Bettison
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Cc: Representative Patrick Garofalo
Senator Zach Duckworth

MN Horse Welfare Coalition
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