



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 160 • 170 Whitetail Way • Bogart, GA 30622

PHONE: 800.209.3337 • FAX: 706.353.0223 • www.QDMA.com

Date: 22 February 2019
To: House Ways and Means Committee
From: Kip Adams, Director of Conservation
Re: House Bill 553

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) I am writing to support House Bill 553 which would transfer the regulatory duties and powers over farmed Cervidae from the Board of Animal Health to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA has over 60,000 members nationwide, and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

Wildlife is held in trust by the state for all of Minnesota's citizens to enjoy. This public ownership of wildlife is an instrumental component of the successful North American Model for Wildlife Conservation, and white-tailed deer are a keystone species of this model. Whitetails are the most popular big game animal in the U.S., and whitetail hunters are the foundation of the over \$50 billion hunting industry. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, approximately three of every four hunters pursues whitetails, and in Minnesota nearly 600,000 hunters contribute over \$300 million annually to the state's economy.

The philosophical void on cervid farming and preserve hunting is vast, but one of the most potentially destructive issues on this subject is loss of regulatory control by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) over these facilities. There are fundamental differences between wildlife and agricultural departments regarding captive cervid issues and free-ranging wildlife populations. Given the potential for disease transmission and the threat to Minnesota's hunting industry, the QDMA advocates for sole regulatory authority of captive cervid facilities to the DNR. This agency has more experience with wildlife species, and more at stake with wildlife disease issues, especially with regard to transmission to free ranging populations.

For the reasons stated above, the QDMA urges you to support House Bill 553 and transfer regulatory authority over farmed cervids to the Minnesota DNR. Thank you for your time and your commitment to Minnesota's natural resources.

Respectfully,

Kip Adams
Director of Conservation