



Study of State Labs at MSU Bozeman

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65th Montana Legislature

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February 28, 2018

The Honorable Steve Daines
320 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Daines:

As members of the Study of State Labs in Montana Committee, we would like to request you to include funding for capital improvements in Senate Bill 2252 Chronic Wasting Disease Support for States Act. The result for Montana could include the opportunity to replace an old and antiquated veterinary diagnostic lab. A new lab facility that meets AAVIDL (American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians) and NAHLN (National Animal Health Laboratory Network) accreditation standards is needed to test for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). Currently, Montana does not have the necessary facility and equipment to conduct the testing. Tests are sent to an out of state lab that is not required to put Montana as a priority in their testing queue, often delaying test results up to three weeks. Additionally, the facility where the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (VDL) resides has several deficiencies that could hinder accreditation and the ability to conduct a wide array of tests beyond CWD. The value of the VDL to human, domestic, livestock, and wildlife health is paramount. Recent discoveries, such as those listed below, are a direct result of the need for capital funding to be included S.2252:

- There are only 17 NAHLN labs nationwide that are able to test and confirm CWD
- CWD has been reported in at least 22 states and two provinces in Canada
- The bordering states and provinces to Montana have the potential for free-ranging deer, elk, and/or moose to infect our herds since they are experiencing higher levels of confirmed CWD
- Two counties in Montana have recently confirmed cases of CWD

The money invested in chronic wasting disease would allow for identification and research into causes and prevention. A federal investment in basic research and infrastructure is an investment in the health and economic future of our nation. Please make public and animal health research a higher priority for our nation by investing in the infrastructure necessary to address chronic wasting disease. Thank you for your consideration and contact us if you would like to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerry White".

Rep. Kerry White