



September 8, 2006

W. Ron DeHaven, DVM  
APHIS Administrator  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Whitten Federal Building, Rm. 312-E  
12<sup>th</sup> & Jefferson Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Re: Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia Disease

Dear Dr. DeHaven:

This letter is submitted to request that USDA-APHIS take immediate action to prohibit or restrict the interstate movement of animals, articles and means of conveyance that may distribute a new strain of viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus (VHSV) recently discovered in the Great Lakes region. The new strain of VHSV detected in the Great Lakes has been demonstrated by isolation and infectivity studies to infect and cause significant mortality of a broad range of feral fish species. The affected fish families include the following: *Esocidae*, *Percidae*, *Sciaenidae*, *Cottidae*, *Percichthyidae*, *Centrarchidae*, *Clupeidae*, and *Catostomidae* ([Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia in the Great Lakes, July 2006](#) [Emerging Disease Notice](#). Cynthia L. Johnson, July 2006.

USDA:APHIS:VS:CEAH:CEI). The broadly identified infection risk attests to the nationwide threat this virus may pose to the commercial aquaculture industry.

We are requesting that APHIS immediately implement interim measures to control the greatest potential risk vector (distribution of live, infected fish), investigate the sources and scope of the risks of VHSV transmission to commercial aquaculture, and evaluate the efficacy of interim or permanent regulations to protect farm raised aquatic animals from VHSV.

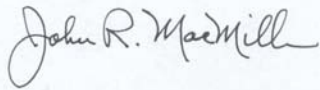
The specific method or methods of transmission of the virus have yet to be conclusively confirmed but could conceivably include fishermen, fishing gear, boats, water and live fish. Therefore, the dimension of the interim measures need to be carefully considered, and efforts should be made to prioritize development of controls for the greatest risks of transmission. Conversely, low risk vectors or fish that can be shown free of the virus should be permitted ready passage between states, and scientific methods to confirm such low risks should be established.

We hope that interim measures will protect domestic aquaculture producers and prevent spread of the virus while its impacts on other cultured fishes (including salmonids, a likely but yet undemonstrated host for the recently detected strain of VHSV) are assessed.

We are prepared to offer any assistance possible in support of your efforts to address this emergency. Please have your staff contact us at their earliest opportunity.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature reads "John R. MacMillan" in a cursive script.

John R. MacMillan, Ph.D.  
President

JRM:ml