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To Keith Roehr, DVM

I am writing you in regards to the future of our Rocky Mountain Regional Animal Health Laboratory. I am aware of the upcoming Senate Bill 154 that would help fund personnel at RMRAHL with State funding from the Veterinary Vaccine and Service Fund. I believe that this funding will be essential to ensure the continued excellence in service and quality that RMRAHL provides for the livestock industry of Colorado.

As a large animal veterinarian in eastern Colorado, I am intimately involved with livestock owners in protecting the health and quality of life of their animals and the public as well as the economic viability of this great industry. As you know, we are continually faced with new challenges that are presented by disease and natural occurrences. Many of the diseases of concern also pose a great risk to public health. The success of our actions depends on a swift and appropriate response to these challenges.

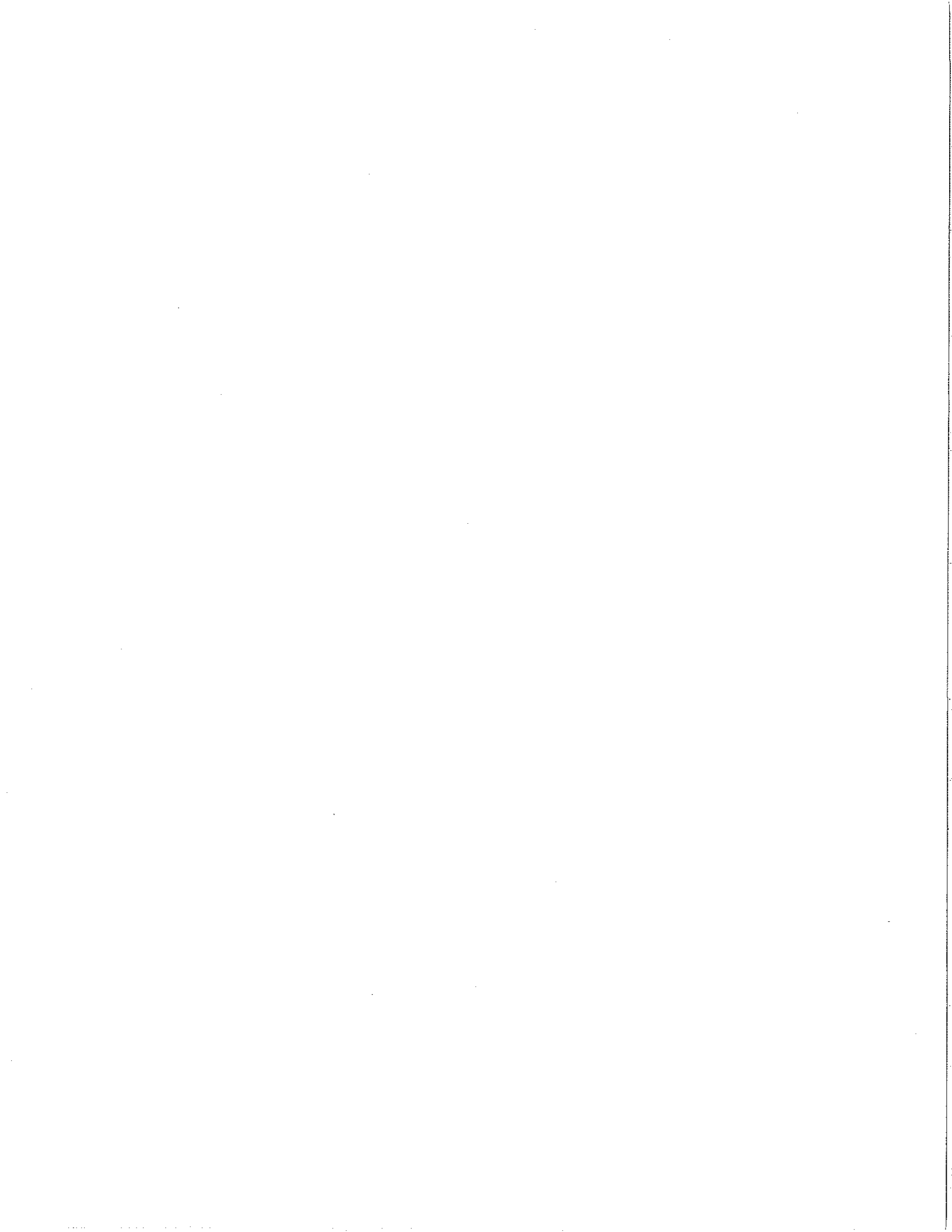
Laboratory testing is an indispensable tool that we have to help control the severity and scope of a disease outbreak. There are some important aspects of laboratory service that must be met in order to ensure full compliance and resolution in a specific case. First of all, lab clients must be able to easily and accurately communicate pertinent information with lab personnel. The lab must also provide excellent accuracy and quality in testing with a quick response time. Laboratory testing must be as low cost as possible in order to ensure full testing and animal movement compliance with State and Federal regulations by livestock owners. Rocky Mountain Regional Animal Health Lab provides the livestock industry and the people of Colorado with outstanding communication as well as quick, accurate, and reasonably priced testing.

I routinely work with some of the other veterinary diagnostic labs in Colorado and other states on cases that require testing that RMRAHL can't offer. I have yet to find another lab that can provide the level of excellent service and communication that RMRAHL provides.

I have spoken with Laboratory Director Tiffany Bringer about the future of Rocky Mountain Regional Animal Health Lab. With the current state of the economy and the unsure future of Federal funding I think we are in danger of limiting the capacity of this lab to function in the future. Passage of Senate Bill 154 would help ensure the success of RMRAHL far into the future. It would be a great disservice to the people of Colorado if we allowed anything to limit or stop the existence of Rocky Mountain Regional Animal Health Laboratory.

Sincerely,

Paul Chard, DVM



STATE OF COLORADO

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Memorandum

To: Members – Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Re: **SB 09-154**

SB 09-154 is a legislative change to the Vet Vaccine Fund requested by the Department of Agriculture- YES vote is requested.

Rocky Mountain Regional Animal Health Lab (RMRAHL)

RMRAHL's mission is to "provide accurate, timely, efficient laboratory services and logistical support to the Division of Animal Industry, veterinary practitioners, HACCP systems, animal health programs, regulatory programs, and agencies. The laboratory also provides a means of conducting animal disease diagnosis and surveillance activities that facilitate the movement and marketing of livestock."

Summary of SB 09-154:

Currently the supplies, diagnostic testing and service fund 35-50-106, C.R.S., (2007) can only be used for the purchase of supplies and laboratory expenses related to the control of infectious diseases, which does not include personnel expenses. This initiative would allow the Department to use the fund to support 1.0 FTE, which is needed due to the 30% increase in animal testing since FY 2004-05. Current funding comes from the federal government and is expected to be eliminated in the coming year.

The Rocky Mountain Regional Animal Health Laboratory (RMRAHL) is a section within the Division of Animal Industry. The RMRAHL provides regulatory livestock testing to meet the needs of the livestock disease control programs administered by the Division of Animal Industry. The RMRAHL has increased the number and type of tests offered over the past years to address emerging diseases and current disease eradication and control programs. This continued testing is needed to adequately provide support services for the livestock industries and private practicing veterinarians of Colorado. In order to continue supporting livestock disease control in Colorado and meet the increase in demands for control programs in the State effectively and efficiently, the laboratory needs to be able to cash fund an additional laboratory technician. In FY2001-02, RMRAHL increased their General funded FTE support from 4 to 5 and have maintained 5 General Funded FTEs since that time. In the last three years, RMRAHL has experienced a 122% increase in both the number of samples and number of tests

performed. In recent years, RMRAHL has brought on tests such as *E. coli* counts for small slaughter establishments for their Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) programs, *Trichomonas* culture and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), West Nile Virus IgM, Johne's liquid culture using the MGIT 960™, Johne's Direct Fecal PCR, Scrapie Genetic Susceptibility Testing, Pseudorabies Virus (PRV) gB ELISA, Brucellosis Fluorescent Polarization Assay (FPA) and Bovine Viral Diarrhea (BVD) ELISA.

This FTE and spending authority will provide that appropriate level of personnel to ensure the continued quality and competence of laboratory testing services. It is paramount that RMRAHL continue to provide the affordable, necessary regulatory testing to veterinarians in Colorado. The addition of personal services to the spending authority and the FTE will enable continued proficiency of regulatory services to the livestock industries and private practicing veterinarians.

The supplies, diagnostic testing, and service fund – expenditures has existing funding present to meet the need of this new FTE and will not require increase of existing laboratory fees to support this FTE until FY 2010-2011. RMRAHL will have to increase fees slightly to accommodate this position at that time but it is estimated that on average it will be no more than \$.40 per test. RMRAHL continually strives to keep our fees for these important regulatory tests as low as possible for the producers and veterinarians of Colorado and even with the slight increase will still be offering affordable testing.

We appreciate your support and ask you to vote "YES" on this important bill. Thank you.

If you have additional questions, please contact either Dr. Keith Roehr, Colorado State Veterinarian, at 303-239-4161 or Danny Tomlinson at 303-638-6509.