

**RESOLUTION  
OF THE  
WISCONSIN AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION  
AND  
WISCONSIN AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
“Support of Increasing DATCP Resources to Combat VHS”**

**Whereas** Fish health is very important to Wisconsin’s economy including 2200 registered fish farms of which 360 are commercial fish farms including DNR’s that generate an estimated \$12 million in on-farm revenue and support through live bait and stocking the 2.3 billion recreational fishing industry, and

**Whereas** DATCP is the lead fish health authority for the state; under ch. 95.60 Wis. State Statutes, DATCP is responsible for developing and administering a fish health program that protects private, state, federal fish farms and hatcheries and the waters of the state from wild fish diseases. Therefore DATCP requires that all fish farms and public hatcheries that raise fish in the state register with the department and meet fish health testing standards, and

**Whereas** Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS), a very serious virus-caused disease of world-wide concern, was found in the Lake Winnebago system on May 11, 2007 in wild fish populations and is a concern for private, and public hatcheries and threatens all waters of Wisconsin, and

**Whereas** concern for VHS has included state and federal bans and restrictions on fish movement which have hurt aquaculturists, including commercial fish farmers and there is potential to devastate Wisconsin’s \$12 million aquaculture industry and prohibit expansion because of these restrictions and bans, and

**Whereas** DATCP has had a tremendous increase on their demands for overseeing fish health in the state and, in order to stop the spread of VHS, the following steps must be taken:

1. Enforcement of regulations that require fish health testing to be done before fish are introduced into Wisconsin.
2. Enforcement of regulation requiring appropriate testing levels on farms and hatcheries (private and public) of the state.
3. Inspection of activities on fish farms and hatcheries to ensure good bio-security is maintained, because these activities may impact VHS spread in the wild, and

**Whereas** DATCP’s goal to effectively manage and control VHS would require inspections of all new farms, increased inspections of existing farms and increase of monitoring and compliance of both private and public hatcheries along with maintaining current levels of the nationally recognized fish health program.

**Therefore be it Resolved** that WAA and WAIAC recommend that new resources are needed at DATCP to combat VHS and it is in the best economic interest of the State to increase staff and resources and we therefore fully support the following:

New resources needed at DATCP

- Veterinary resources – 1      To assist with VHA evaluation, VHS consultation and issue import permits
- Program assistance – 2      To assist with industry requests, phone calls, tracking fish farm classifications as VHS program develops, document and help develop rules, policies, and VHS program
- Inspections staff – 4      To increase fish farm inspections, including DNR hatcheries, increase import monitoring, records examinations etc.
- Compliance staff – 2      To follow – up on violations. Data supports that as inspections increase so do compliance cases, the appropriate ratio is 1 compliance officer needed per two inspectors.

*Costs of additional resources*

<b>Staff Type</b>	<b># of positions</b>	<b>Final Estimated Cost</b>
Veterinarian Senior	1	\$ 109,343.63
Operations Office Associate A	2	\$ 98,933.00
AH Inspector - Entry	4	\$ 240,682.80
AH Compliance	2	\$ 137,125.66
<b>Total Annual Cost</b>		<b>\$ 586,085.10</b>

Wisconsin’s aquaculture industry has supported DATCP’s fish health program since its development in 1998 and recognizes that because of these high health standards Wisconsin aquaculture has grown to be recognized as the leading aquaculture state in the Great Lakes Region. We believe that if DATCP is given the necessary resources we can work through the VHS crisis together and therefore reduce the economic losses, develop a risk management plan and strengthen the fish stocking program.

Signed:

Bill West, WAA President

Dave Gollon, WAIAC Board

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