

From: [Glenda Smith](#)
To: [Miller, Shannon D \(DEC\)](#)
Subject: Comments regarding M. ovi testing
Date: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 5:28:25 PM

Dear Comissioner Brune:

I am writing in opposition of the proposed changes to 18 AAC 36.125 and 18 AAC 36.135 that would require testing of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* for importing sheep and goats. According to a recent study supported by funding competitively awarded by the Wild Sheep Foundation, *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (*M. ovi*) is a **globally distributed pathogen**. Older studies report findings as far back as the 1970s.

With *M. ovi* being a pathogen that is already found in Alaska's wildlife, testing animals before they come into the state will have no impact on whether this pathogen is introduced to wildlife. With *M. ovi* currently in Alaska's wildlife populations (across the state and in multiple species), testing imported sheep and goats will increase the cost to our farmers to do business. It will increase costs to maintain healthy flocks by bringing in new genetics. It will increase costs to the consumer who get meat, dairy or fiber from these farms. It will increase costs to our 4-H and FFA kids.

I've been involved in managing agriculture properties for the state and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough in the past and I maintain a significant interest in food safety and security here in Alaska. We are absolutely at the mercy of events we, as Alaskans, have no opportunity to control, for example earthquakes, longshoreman strikes, and others. In my opinion, we should be finding ways to support Alaska's farmers and ranchers and encourage growth instead of imposing costly and burdensome regulations.

I urge you to reconsider implementing regulations that would impose any required testing for *M. ovi*, this pathogen is endemic in North America and needs more local research conducted to better understand it. If necessary, I think the current focus should be on more cost-effective and efficient strategies that maintain separation between livestock and wildlife.

Respectfully,

Glenda Smith
Palmer, Alaska