

Sample Communication for Representatives:

Dear Representative _____,

I am writing to request that you support funding for Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF) research and vaccine development for bison. I am a bison producer from (your area...briefly describe your operation). MCF infects sheep with no ill effects but spreads to susceptible species like bison with fatal results. The disease occurs as small to large outbreaks affecting adult bison, and typically results in heavy mortality. One outbreak in a bison feedlot in Idaho resulted in over 800 head lost, with losses in the vicinity of a million dollars.

The Animal Disease Research Unit, ARS-USDA, Pullman, WA, in collaboration with the University of Wyoming, continues to be at the forefront in continued work on MCF, including vaccine development. This team has worked on a safe and effective vaccine for over 12 years and is close to succeeding, as they finalize a proof of concept study for the project.

The National Bison Association, working with ARS, has estimated that \$2 million in funding from Title VII - Research in the next Farm Bill would effectively develop, manufacture, promote and distribute a vaccine to not only commercial bison operations, but also tribal and conservation herds across the United States. Due to the small bison population, there is little incentive for commercial production of the vaccine, which is approximately 12 years in the making. The National Bison Association is advocating for continued funding for vaccine research, and federally supported vaccine development so MCF can be left in the history books.

If you are willing to support this funding request, or need additional information on this issue, please reach out to Jim Matheson, executive director of the National Bison Association, at Jim@bisoncentral.com.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, (Your Name)