
RESOLUTION: 25 APPROVED

**SUBJECT MATTER: Support for Updating the United States Geological Survey
National Wildlife Health Center Laboratory Facilities**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Geological Survey (USGS), National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC), located in Madison, Wisconsin, is the only federal Biological Safety Level-3 (BSL-3) facility dedicated exclusively to scientific investigation and research on wildlife diseases that may threaten human, animal, and environmental health. The NWHC is an affiliate National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratory and is a World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Collaborating Centre for Wildlife Health and Biodiversity. It is designated by the United States (US) Department of the Interior (DOI) as a USGS "mission essential" facility and is registered with and inspected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Federal Select Agent Program (FSAP). Built in approximately 1960, the NWHC is reaching the end of its usable life despite being well-maintained. The facility requires replacement and modernization to meet current standards for a modern high-level biocontainment facility working with high consequence pathogens and select agents (pathogens with potential to be weaponized against humans or livestock). If not replaced within the next 5-10 years, the laboratory and DOI may lose the ability to conduct nationally and internationally important work on detecting, characterizing, monitoring, preventing, and controlling wildlife diseases, many of which also involve livestock or humans.

The NWHC has conducted three master or concept plans and business case analyses to explore the most feasible, cost-effective and least disruptive option for modernization, including comparing renovation versus new construction, owned versus leased facilities, and options for relocation. All studies have indicated that new construction on the current site is the most cost-effective option that minimizes disruption to continuity of operations.

The NWHC supports the mission of the United States Animal Health Association and its members by conducting surveillance for high consequence pathogens in wildlife, many of which also infect domestic animals, or impact human or livestock health. The NWHC is a significant resource for wildlife agencies in the US and globally, supporting wildlife disease outbreak investigations and providing important tools and technology that assist with the management of diseases in wildlife populations. Recently, the NWHC has contributed to the understanding of diseases such as white nose syndrome, *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal), and snake fungal disease. With ever increasing concerns over emerging, reemerging, and transboundary diseases, the demands on the NWHC facility and staff can be expected to increase.

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RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of the Interior to prioritize the identification of resources and methods to modernize the facilities at the United States Geological Survey, National Wildlife Health Center in order to protect wildlife, livestock, and public health.