Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Honourable Lana Popham, M.L.A.

Minister of Agriculture

Room 325 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC  V8V 1X4

Dear Minister,

As the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, I wish to bring your attention to the pandemic wild sheep throughout British Columbia are facing.

Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae (M. Ovi) is a respiratory pathogen that is associated with pneumonia in sheep and goats. Frequently M. Ovi is the infection that typically triggers bighorn sheep pneumonia outbreaks, a nightmarish parallel to COVID19. M. Ovi has been on the landscape in B.C for decades and has not been addressed and is continuing to spread and kill our wildlife.

M. Ovi has already devastated the bighorn herd in Chasm, which went from around 125 in size to 15. Adding to this, the Fraser River herds which run from Lillooet to Williams Lake have dropped to 1,500 from 4,500.

Recently the Ministry has confirmed that 2 cases were found in Vaseux in the Okanagan. The volunteers and Ministry staff had to destroy two lambs, which were barely two months old.

It is of note that the B.C government states on the Agriculture website that the “B.C. Government supports animal welfare by building awareness of production practices that support animal welfare” and “Monitoring issues and developing appropriate solutions to ensure an effective government framework for animal welfare”.

It could safely be hypothesized that these production practices as stated mandate minimum separation between wild and domestic stock for the safety and welfare of both.

We see and appreciate the proactive work being done to prevent the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease in the Kootenays yet are left confused as to why this same fervour is not being used against M. Ovi.

As my elected officials, I am asking you to act quickly and enact urgent measures to prevent further loss. This would entail an inclusive policy for all wild sheep, both thinhorn and bighorn. There needs to be different tools in place based on herd location, dynamics and threat assessment levels, with a priority on maintaining herd health and mandatory separation between wild and domestic stocks.

I trust you will work hard to legislate immediate and drastic measures to end this pandemic.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

FULL NAME, SIGNATURE, ADDRESS/CONTACT INFO. THIS IS CRITICAL TO PROVE YOU ARE ‘REAL’ AND IN YOUR OFFICIALS RIDING.