Dear Editors and Members of the Editorial Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to revise and resubmit our manuscript, currently titled “*Polar Metabolite Profiles Distinguish Between Early and Severe Sub-maintenance Nutritional States of Wild Bighorn Sheep*.” We sincerely appreciate the time and effort that you and the reviewers have devoted to evaluating our work, and we are grateful for the constructive comments and suggestions that have helped us improve the clarity and rigor of our manuscript.

In the revised submission, we have:

• **Addressed all reviewer comments in a point-by-point manner:** We have carefully reviewed and responded to each comment from Reviewers 1, 2, and 3, detailing the specific revisions made. These responses are included in the separate “Response to Reviewers” documents.  
• **Revised text and figures for clarity and accuracy:** We have corrected typographical errors, updated figure legends, and refined descriptions of statistical approaches. Additionally, we have incorporated modifications (e.g., color labeling in Figure 4 and Figure 5, consistent terminology for sub-maintenance nutritional states, and clarifications regarding the moderate-SM group) to ensure alignment with reviewers’ suggestions.  
• **Reformatted references and supplemental materials:** Per the reviewers’ and journal’s guidelines, we have reformatted references using the MDPI style requirements for Metabolites and verified that all supplemental figures and references are properly cited in the main text.  
• **Enhanced discussion of methodological decisions:** We have expanded our explanation regarding the decision to exclude the moderate-SM group in certain analyses, providing additional context on sample size limitations, statistical power, and resulting metabolic insights.  
• **Improved clarity in the Introduction and Conclusion:** We refined our introduction to avoid presenting conclusions prematurely and expanded the conclusion to consistently reference sub-maintenance states without unnecessary abbreviations.

We believe these revisions have strengthened our manuscript and further highlighted the significance of our findings. We trust that this revised version of our manuscript addresses all concerns and meets the standards of Metabolites. We look forward to the possibility of publication in your journal, and we thank you once again for your consideration.

Sincerely,