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(72) Inventeurs/Inventors:

NABEL, GARY J., US;
YANG, ZHI-YONG, US;
SULLIVAN, NANCY, US;
SANCHEZ, ANTHONY, US

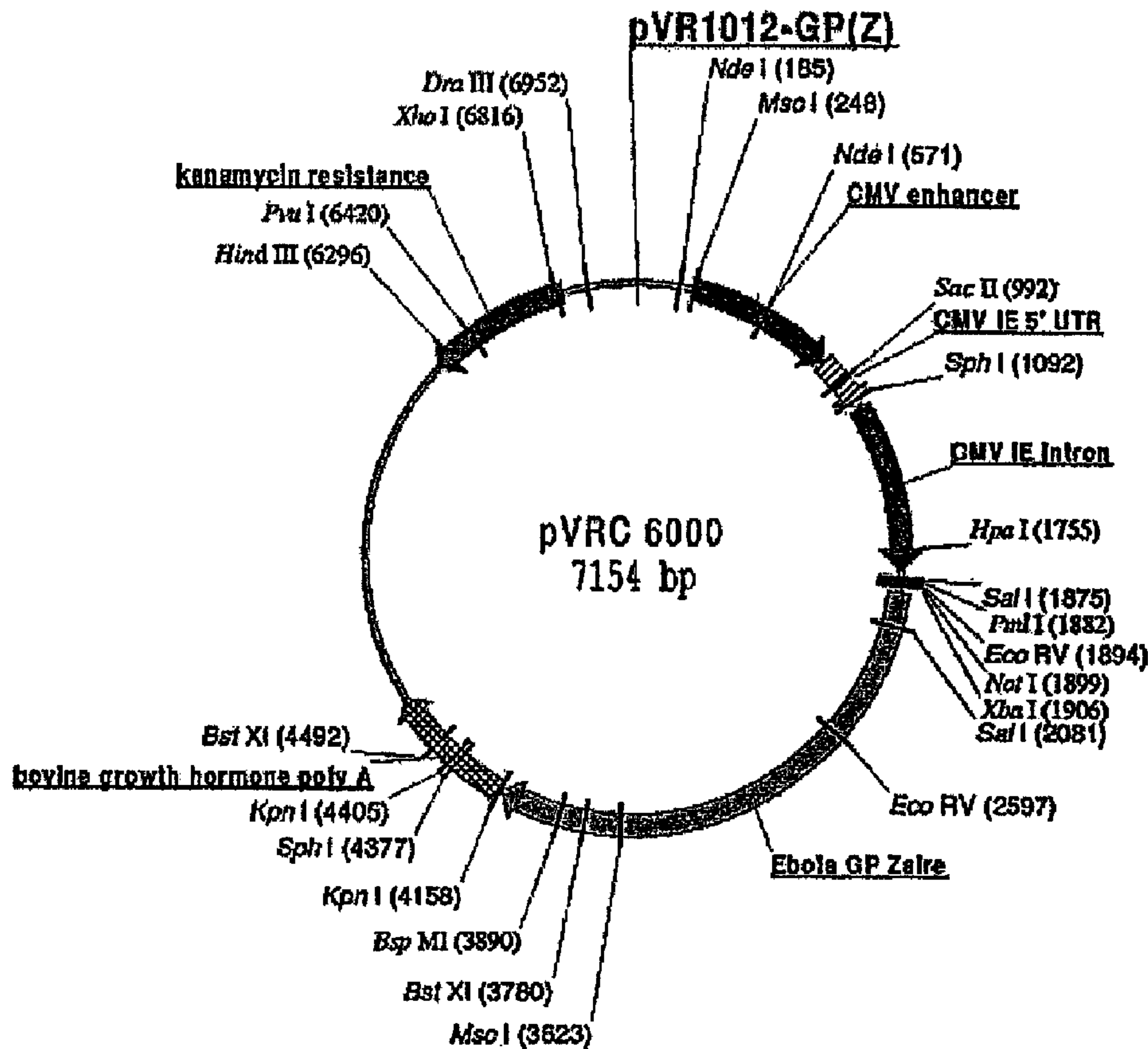
(73) Propriétaire/Owner:

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF
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(74) Agent: SMART & BIGGAR

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RENFERMANT UN METAL, SON UTILISATION DANS DES MOTEURS DEUX TEMPS

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(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

The present invention relates generally to viral vaccines and, more particularly, to filovirus vaccines and methods of eliciting an immune response against a filovirus or disease caused by infection with filovirus.



ABSTRACT

The present invention relates generally to viral vaccines and, more particularly, to filovirus vaccines and methods of eliciting an immune response against a filovirus or disease caused by infection with filovirus.

DEMANDES OU BREVETS VOLUMINEUX

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JUMBO APPLICATIONS / PATENTS

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DEVELOPMENT OF A PREVENTIVE VACCINE FOR FILOVIRUS INFECTION IN PRIMATES

Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates generally to viral vaccines and, more particularly, to filovirus vaccines and methods of eliciting an immune response against a filovirus or a disease caused by infection with filovirus.

Background of the Invention

10 The Ebola viruses, and the genetically-related Marburg virus, are filoviruses associated with outbreaks of highly lethal hemorrhagic fever in humans and primates in North America, Europe, and Africa (Peters, C.J. *et al.* in: *Fields Virology*, eds. Fields, B.N. *et al.* 1161-1176, Philadelphia, Lippincott-Raven, 1996; Peters, C.J. *et al.* 1994 *Semin Virol* 5:147-154). Ebola viruses are negative-stranded RNA viruses comprised of four subtypes, including those described in the Zaire, Sudan, Reston, and Ivory Coast episodes (Sanchez, 15 A. *et al.* 1996 *PNAS USA* 93:3602-3607). Although several subtypes have been defined, the genetic organization of these viruses is similar, each containing seven linearly arrayed genes. Among the viral proteins, the envelope glycoprotein exists in two alternative forms, a 50-70 kilodalton (kDa) secreted protein of unknown function encoded by the viral genome and a 130 kDa transmembrane glycoprotein generated by RNA editing that 20 mediates viral entry (Peters, C.J. *et al.* in: *Fields Virology*, eds. Fields, B.N. *et al.* 1161-1176, Philadelphia, Lippincott-Raven, 1996; Sanchez, A. *et al.* 1996 *PNAS USA* 93:3602-3607). Other structural gene products include the nucleoprotein (NP), matrix proteins VP24 and VP40, presumed nonstructural proteins VP30 and VP35, and the viral polymerase (reviewed in Peters, C.J. *et al.* in: *Fields Virology*, eds. Fields, B.N. *et al.* 1161-25 1176, Philadelphia, Lippincott-Raven, 1996). Although spontaneous variation of its RNA sequence does occur in nature, there appears to be less nucleotide polymorphism within Ebola subtypes than among other RNA viruses (Sanchez, A. *et al.* 1996 *PNAS USA* 93:3602-3607), suggesting that immunization may be useful in protecting against this disease. Previous attempts to elicit protective immune responses against Ebola virus using 30 traditional active and passive immunization approaches have, however, not succeeded in primates (Peters, C.J. *et al.* in: *Fields Virology*, eds. Fields, B.N. *et al.* 1161-1176,

Philadelphia, Lippincott-Raven, 1996; Clegg, J.C.S. *et al.* 1997 *New Generation Vaccines*, eds.: Levine, M.M. *et al.* 749-765, New York, NY. Marcel Dekker, Inc.; Jahrling, P.B. *et al.* 1996 *Arch Virol Suppl* 11:135-140). It would thus be desirable to provide a vaccine to elicit an immune response against a filovirus or disease caused by infection with filovirus. It would further be desirable to provide methods of making and using said vaccine.

Summary of the Invention

Outbreaks of hemorrhagic fever caused by the Ebola virus are associated with high mortality rates that are a distinguishing feature of this human pathogen. The highest lethality is associated with the Zaire subtype, one of four strains identified to date (Feldmann, H. *et al.* 1994 *Virology* 199:469-473; Sanchez, A. *et al.* 1996 *PNAS USA* 93:3602-3607). Its rapid progression allows little opportunity to develop natural immunity, and there is currently no effective anti-viral therapy. Therefore, vaccination offers a promising intervention to prevent infection and limit spread. Here we describe a highly effective vaccine strategy for Ebola virus infection in primates. A combination of DNA immunization and boosting with adenoviral vectors that encode viral proteins generated cellular and humoral immunity in cynomolgus macaques. Challenge with a lethal dose of the highly pathogenic, wild-type, 1976 Mayinga strain of Ebola Zaire virus resulted in uniform infection in controls, who progressed to a moribund state and death in less than one week. In contrast, all vaccinated animals were asymptomatic for more than six months, with no detectable virus after the initial challenge. These findings demonstrate that it is possible to develop a preventive vaccine against Ebola virus infection in primates.

In one aspect the invention provides an expression vector comprising an enhancer with at least 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, or 100 % sequence identity to the full length SEQ ID NO: 52, wherein the enhancer mediates expression of a nucleic acid operably linked thereto.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 shows VRC6000 (pVR1012-GP(Z)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 2 shows VRC6001 (pVR1012x/s-GP(Z)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 3 shows VRC6002 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta MUC) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 4 shows VRC6003 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta MUC delta FUR) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

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Figure 5 shows VRC6004 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 6 shows VRC6005 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2 delta C-term A) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

5 **Figure 7** shows VRC6006 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2 delta C-term B) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 8 shows VRC6007 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2 delta FUS) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

10 **Figure 9** shows VRC6008 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta TM) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 10 shows VRC 6052 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta SGP) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 11 shows VRC 6101 (pVR1012x/s Ebola GP(R) (dTM)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

15 **Figure 12** shows VRC 6110 (pAdApt Ebola GP(R) (dTM)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 13 shows VRC6200 (pVR1012-GP(S)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

20 **Figure 14** shows VRC 6201 (pVR1012x/s Ebola GP(S)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 15 shows VRC6202 (pVR1012-GP(S) delta TM) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 16 shows VRC6300 (pVR1012-GP(IC)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

25 **Figure 17** shows VRC6301 (pVR1012x/s-GP(IC)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 18 shows VRC6302 (pVR1012-GP(IC) delta TM) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

30 **Figure 19** shows VRC 6303 (pVR1012x/s Ebola GP (IC) (dTM)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

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Figure 20 shows VRC 6310 (pAdApt Ebola GP (IC) (dTM)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 21 shows VRC6351 (pVR1012x/s-SGP(IC)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

5 **Figure 22** shows VRC6400 (pVR1012-NP) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 23 shows VRC6401 (pVR1012x/s-NP) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

10 **Figure 24** shows VRC6500 (pVR1012-VP35) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 25 shows VRC6600 (pAD/CMV-GP(dTM)(Z-CITE-S) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 26 shows VRC6601 (pAdApt Ebola GP(S)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

15 **Figure 27** shows VRC 6602 (pAdApt Ebola GP(S)(dTM)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 28 shows VRC6603 (pAdApt Ebola GP(Z)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

20 **Figure 29** shows VRC 6604 (pAdApt Ebola GP(Z)(dTM)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 30 shows VRC6701 (pVR1012-Marburg) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 31 shows VRC 6702 (pVR1012x/s Marburg GP (dTM)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

25 **Figure 32** shows VRC 6710 (pAdApt Marburg GP (dTM)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 33 shows VRC6800 (pVR1012x/s Lassa GP) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

30 **Figure 34** shows VRC6801 (pVR1012x/s Lassa GP (dTM)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

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Figure 35 shows VRC6810 (pAdApt Lassa GP) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 36 shows VRC6811 (pAdApt Lassa GP (dTM)) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

5 **Figure 37** shows CMV/R Ebola GP (Z) deltaTM/h (codon optimized) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 38 shows pVR1012 Ebola GP (Z, P87666) delta TM/h (codon optimized) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

10 **Figure 39** shows CMV/R Ebola GP (S/Gulu) delta TM/h (codon optimized) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 40 shows CMV/R Ebola GP (S,Q66798) delta TM/h (codon optimized) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in
15 Table 2).

Figure 41 shows VRC6802, pVR1012x/s Lassa delta TM/h (codon optimized) construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 42 shows VRC6703, pVR1012x/s Marburg delta TM/h (codon optimized)
20 construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 43 shows CMV/R Ebola NP construct map (see, Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses in Table 2).

Figure 44 is a diagrammatic representation of secreted glycoprotein (SGP) and
25 glycoprotein (GP) molecules of Ebola virus (Zaire species isolated in 1976) showing important structural features. The white N-terminal regions of SGP and GP correspond to identical (shared) sequences, while the black C termini identify sequences unique to GP or SGP molecules. The common signalase cleavage sites for both SGP and GP and the furin cleavage site for GP0 (uncleaved form of GP) (↓) were determined by N-terminal
30 sequencing. Also shown are cysteine residues (S), predicted N-linked glycosylation sites (Y-shaped projections), a predicted fusion peptide, a heptad repeat sequence, and a

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transmembrane anchor sequence. In Ebola viruses, the positions of these structures are conserved and their sequences are very similar or, in the case of N-linked glycosylation sites, are at least concentrated in the central region of GP. Signalase cleavage site is SEQ ID NO: 48, Furin cleavage site is SEQ ID NO: 49, and Fusion peptide is SEQ ID NO: 50.

5 **Figure 45** is a diagrammatic representation of the structural GP. Shown is the predicted orientation of the GP1-GP2 heterodimer linked by undetermined disulfide bonding (indicated by the question mark). Intramolecular disulfide bonds that are shown come from prior predictions based on similarities to retrovirus glycoprotein structures. See Fig. 44 for other features of the amino acid sequence.

10 **Figure 46** shows induction of the cytopathic effects by Ebola virus glycoproteins and mapping of the molecular determinants of cytopathicity.

Figure 47 shows Ebola-specific antibody responses generated by different DNA/adenovirus prime-boost combinations. Data are the means of the reciprocal endpoint dilution for each group of mice and error bars represent the standard deviation.

15 **Figure 48** shows DNA-Adenovirus immunization of cynomolgus macaques. A) Immunization schedule for DNA and/or adenovirus injections, and challenge with the wild-type Mayinga strain of the Zaire subtype of Ebola virus. B) Elisa titers of Ebola-specific antibodies in serum. Serum was collected at week 12 (open bar) and 2 days before the immunization at week 24 (closed bar). C) Lymphoproliferative responses to Ebola-
20 secreted glycoprotein (SGP) following immunization. Bars represent the average fold-proliferation of all four blood samples for each subject. The standard deviation is not shown because the baseline level of induction varied between experiments. However, PBMC from all 8 animals were assayed within the same experiment for each time point, and the averages displayed in the figure are representative of the results obtained for any
25 single time point. D) Lymphoproliferative responses to Ebola SGP in bulk PBMC following depletion of lymphocyte subsets. PBMC from week 24 were treated with Dynal magnetic beads coated with the indicated antibody to deplete CD4⁺ or CD8⁺ cell subsets. Cells remaining after depletion were normalized for input cell number and stimulated as described in the Example. Results are shown for two control (Subjects 2 and 3) and two
30 vaccinated (Subjects 6 and 7) monkeys.

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Figure 49 shows protection of cynomolgus macaques against lethal challenge with Ebola virus after DNA-adenovirus immunization. A, B) Hepatic enzyme levels in monkeys after challenge with Ebola virus. Liver enzymes [alanine aminotransferase (ALT) and aspartate aminotransferase (AST)] levels in the non-human primate sera were measured by standard recommended procedures using General chemistry 12 reagent disk for the Piccolo™ Analyzer (Abaxis, Inc., Sunnyvale, CA). Results are shown for four immunized (closed symbols) and four control (open symbols) monkeys. C) Plasma viraemia in monkeys following infection with Ebola virus. Crosses represent time of death in control animals [days 5 (subject 1) and 6 (subjects 2 and 4)]. One control animal, subject 3, was euthanized on day 7 when it was moribund. One vaccinated animal that was resistant to infection, subject 5, was euthanized on day 10 for histological examination of tissues. By day 17, none of the animals had detectable viraemia, and they remained aviraemic for the duration of the observation period (6 months). Data are the reciprocal endpoint dilution of serum for each monkey. Results are shown for four immunized (closed symbols) and four control (open symbols) monkeys.

Figure 50 shows enhanced expression of modified CMV expression vector, CMV/R.

Figure 51 shows enhanced immunogenicity of modified CMV expression vector, CMV/R, in mice.

Table 1 Ebola/Marburg/Lassa GenBank Accession Numbers.

Gene	GenBank Accession number
Ebola Zaire GP	U23187, P87666
Ebola Zaire NP	J04337
Ebola Sudan GP	U28134, Q66798
Ebola Sudan NP	AF173836
Ebola Ivory Coast GP	U28006
Ebola Ivory Coast NP	JO4336
Ebola Reston GP	U23152
Ebola Reston NP	
Marburg GP	Z12132
Marburg NP	X68495
Lassa GP	AF181853
Lassa NP	AF246121

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Table 2. Ebola/Marburg/Lassa Plasmids, and Recombinant Adenoviruses

Construct	Construct Name/Description	Construct Map Name	SEQ ID NO	Figure
VRC6000	VRC6000 (pVR1012-GP(Z))	pVR1012-GP(Z)	1	1
VRC6001	VRC6001 (pVR1012x/s-GP(Z))	pVR1012x/s Ebola GP(Z)	2	2
VRC6002	VRC6002 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta MUC)	pVR1012-GP(Z) delta MUC	3	3
VRC6003	VRC6003 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta MUC delta FUR)	pVR1012-GP(Z) delta MUC delta FUR	4	4
VRC6004	VRC6004 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2)	pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2	5	5
VRC6005	VRC6005 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2 delta C-term A)	pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2 delta C-term A	6	6
VRC6006	VRC6006 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2 delta C-term B)	pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2 delta C-term B	7	7
VRC6007	VRC6007 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2 delta FUS)	pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2 delta FUS	8	8
VRC6008	VRC6008 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta TM)	pVR1012-GP(Z) delta TM	9	9
VRC6052	VRC 6052 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta SGP)	pVR1012-GP(Z) delta SGP	10	10
VRC6101	VRC 6101 (pVR1012x/s Ebola GP(R) (dTM))	pVR1012x/s Ebola GP(R)(dTM)	11	11
VRC6110	VRC 6110 (pAdApt Ebola GP(R) (dTM))	pAdApt Ebola GP(R) (dTM)	12	12
VRC6200	VRC6200 (pVR1012-GP(S))	pVR1012-GP(S)	13	13
VRC6201	VRC 6201 (pVR1012x/s Ebola GP(S))	pVR1012x/s Ebola GP(S)	14	14
VRC6202	VRC6202 (pVR1012-GP(S) delta TM)	pVR1012-GP(S) delta TM	15	15
VRC6300	VRC6300 (pVR1012-GP(IC))	pVR1012-GP(IC)	16	16
VRC6301	VRC6301 (pVR1012x/s-GP(IC))	pVR1012x/s Ebola GP(IC)	17	17
VRC6302	VRC6302 (pVR1012-GP(IC) delta TM)	pVR1012-GP(IC) delta TM	18	18
VRC6303	VRC 6303 (pVR1012x/s Ebola GP (IC) (dTM))	pVR1012x/s Ebola GP(IC)(dTM)	19	19
VRC6310	VRC 6310 (pAdApt Ebola GP (IC) (dTM))	pAdApt Ebola GP(IC)(dTM)	20	20
VRC6351	VRC6351 (pVR1012x/s-sGP(IC))	pVR1012x/s-sGP(IC)	21	21
VRC6400	VRC6400 (pVR1012-NP)	pVR1012-NP	22	22
VRC6401	VRC6401 (pVR1012x/s-NP)	pVR1012x/s Ebola-NP	23	23
VRC6500	VRC6500 (pVR1012-VP35)	pVR1012-VP35	24	24
VRC6600	VRC6600 (pAD/CMV-GP(dTM)(Z-CITE-S))	pAD/CMV-GP(dTM)(Z-CITE-S)	25	25
VRC6601	VRC6601 (pAdApt Ebola GP(S))	pAdApt Ebola GP(S)	26	26
VRC6602	VRC 6602 (pAdApt Ebola GP(S)(dTM))	pAdApt Ebola GP(S)(dTM)	27	27
VRC6603	VRC6603 (pAdApt Ebola GP(Z))	pAdApt Ebola GP(Z)	28	28

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Construct	Construct Name/Description	Construct Map Name	SEQ ID NO	Figure
VRC6604	VRC 6604 (pAdApt Ebola GP(Z)(dTM))	pAdApt Ebola GP(Z)(dTM)	29	29
VRC6701	VRC6701 (pVR1012-Marburg)	pVR1012 Marburg	30	30
VRC6702	VRC 6702 (pVR1012x/s Marburg GP (dTM))	pVR1012x/s Marburg GP(dTM)	31	31
VRC6710	VRC 6710 (pAdApt Marburg GP (dTM))	pAdApt Marburg GP (dTM)	32	32
VRC6800	VRC6800 (pVR1012x/s Lassa GP)	pVR1012x/s Lassa GP	33	33
VRC6801	VRC6801 (pVR1012x/s Lassa GP (dTM))	pVR1012x/s Lassa GP (dTM)	34	34
VRC6810	VRC6810 (pAdApt Lassa GP)	pAdApt Lassa GP	35	35
VRC6811	VRC6811 (pAdApt Lassa GP (dTM))	pAdApt Lassa GP (dTM)	36	36
	CMV/R Ebola GP (Z) delta TM/h (codon optimized)	CMV/R Ebola GP(Z) delta TM/h	37	37
	pVR1012 Ebola GP(Z, P87666)delta TM/h (codon optimized)	pVR1012x/s Ebola GP(Z) delta TM/h (P87666)	38	38
	CMV/R Ebola GP (S/Gulu) delta TM/h (codon optimized)	CMV/R-GP(S/G)(delta TM)/h	39	39
	CMV/R Ebola GP (S,Q66798) delta TM/h (codon optimized)	CMV/R-GP(S,Q66798)(dTM)/h	40	40
VRC6802	VRC6802, pVR1012x/s Lassa delta TM/h (codon optimized)	pVR1012x/s Lassa (codon optimized)	41	41
VRC6703	VRC6703, pVR1012x/sMarburgdelta TM/h (codon optimized)	pVR1012x/s Marburg (codon optimized)	42	42
	CMV/R Ebola NP	CMV/R Ebola NP	43	43

Detailed Description of the Invention

Filovirus vaccines are provided comprising a nucleic acid molecule encoding a filoviral structural protein operatively-linked to a control sequence in a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient. In one embodiment, the nucleic acid molecule encodes the transmembrane form of the viral glycoprotein (GP). In another embodiment, the nucleic acid molecule encodes the secreted form of the viral glycoprotein (SGP). In yet another embodiment, the nucleic acid molecule encodes the viral nucleoprotein (NP).

The present invention further includes vaccines comprising nucleic acid molecules encoding filoviral structural proteins other than GP, SGP, and NP, e.g., other structural gene products which elicit an immune response against a filovirus or disease caused by infection with filovirus. The nucleic acid molecules of the vaccines of the present invention encode structural gene products of any Ebola viral strain including the Zaire, Sudan, Ivory Coast and Reston strains. Nucleic acid molecules encoding structural gene products of the genetically-related Marburg virus strains may also be employed. Moreover, the nucleic acid molecules of the present invention may be modified, e.g., the nucleic acid molecules set forth herein may be mutated, as long as the modified expressed protein elicits an immune response against a pathogen or disease. For example, the nucleic acid molecule may be mutated so that the expressed protein is less toxic to cells. The present invention also includes vaccines comprising a combination of nucleic acid molecules. For example, and without limitation, nucleic acid molecules encoding GP, SGP and NP of the Zaire, Sudan and Ivory Coast Ebola strains may be combined in any combination, in one vaccine composition.

The present invention also provides methods for immunizing a subject against disease caused by infection with filovirus comprising administering to the subject an immunoeffective amount of a filovirus vaccine. Methods of making and using filovirus vaccines are also provided by the present invention including the preparation of pharmaceutical compositions.

Biochemical Analysis of Secreted and Virion Glycoproteins of Ebola Virus.

Ebola (EBO) viruses are members of the *Filoviridae* and cause a severe, often fatal form of hemorrhagic fever disease in human and/or non-human primates. The glycoprotein (GP) gene of filoviruses is the fourth gene (of seven) from the 3' end of the negative-strand

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RNA genome. All EBO viruses characterized thus far have the same unconventional type of GP gene organization that results in the expression of a secreted, nonstructural glycoprotein (SGP) in preference to the structural GP. The SGP is encoded in a single frame (0 frame), while the GP is encoded in two frames (0 and -1 frames). Expression of the GP occurs when the two frames are connected through a transcriptional editing event that results in the insertion of a single extra adenosine (added to a run of seven adenosines).

Referring to Figure 44, for Zaire species of EBO virus, the N-terminal 295 residues (including signal sequence) of the SGP (364 total residues) and GP (676 total residues) are identical, but the length and composition of their C-terminal sequences are unique. The GP, a type 1 transmembrane protein, is found on the surface of the infectious virion and functions in attachment structure in the binding and entry of the virus into susceptible cells. Comparisons of GP predicted amino acid sequences for all species of EBO virus show a general conservation in the N-terminal and C-terminal regions (each approximately one-third of the total sequence) and are separated by a highly variable middle section. This protein is highly glycosylated, containing large amounts of N- and O-linked glycans, and for Marburg (MBG) virus (another type of filovirus) has been shown to form trimers. Just N terminal to the transmembrane anchor sequence of the GP (residues 650 to 672) is a motif (residues 585 to 609) that is highly conserved in filoviruses. This sequence also has a high degree of homology with a motif in the glycoproteins of oncogenic retroviruses that has been shown to be immunosuppressive *in vitro*. Partially overlapping this motif is a heptad repeat sequence (53 residues; positions 541 to 593) that is thought to function in the formation of intermolecular coiled coils in the assembly of trimers, similar to structures predicted for the surface glycoproteins of other viruses. Immediately N terminal to this sequence is a predicted fusion peptide followed closely by a putative multibasic cleavage site for a subtilisin/kexin-like convertase, furin. Cleavage by furin has been indirectly demonstrated by use of specific inhibitors and is predicted to occur at the last arginine in the sequence RRTRR↓ (position 501 from the beginning of the open reading frame [ORF]). Although the role of the SGP is less defined, recent studies have shown that SGP can bind to neutrophils, while GP binds to endothelial cells. The different binding patterns of SGP and GP suggest that despite having identical N-terminal amino acid sequences (~280 residues), these glycoproteins are structurally very distinct from one another.

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Referring to Figure 45, the glycoproteins expressed by a Zaire species of Ebola virus were analyzed for cleavage, oligomerization, and other structural properties to better define their functions. The 50- to 70-kDa secreted and 150-kDa virion/structural glycoproteins (SGP and GP, respectively), which share the 295 N-terminal residues, are
5 cleaved near the N terminus by signalase. A second cleavage event, occurring in GP at a multibasic site (RRTRR↓) (SEQ ID NO: 51) that is likely mediated by furin, results in two glycoproteins (GP1 and GP2) linked by disulfide bonding. This furin cleavage site is present in the same position in the GPs of all Ebola viruses (R[R/K]X[R/K]R↓), and one is predicted for Marburg viruses (R[R/K]KR↓), although in a different location. Based on the
10 results of cross-linking studies, investigators were able to determine that Ebola virion peplomers are composed of trimers of GP1-GP2 heterodimers and that aspects of their structure are similar to those of retroviruses (including lentiviruses like HIV-1 and HIV-2), paramyxoviruses, and influenza viruses. Investigators also determined that SGP is secreted from infected cells almost exclusively in the form of a homodimer that is joined by
15 disulfide bonding.

Referring to Figure 46, investigators defined the main viral determinant of Ebola virus pathogenicity; synthesis of the virion glycoprotein (GP) of Ebola virus Zaire induced cytotoxic effects in human endothelial cells *in vitro* and *in vivo*. This effect mapped to a serine-threonine-rich, mucin-like domain of this type I transmembrane glycoprotein, one of
20 seven gene products of the virus. Gene transfer of GP into explanted human or porcine blood vessels caused massive endothelial cell loss within 48 hours that led to a substantial increase in vascular permeability. Deletion of the mucin-like region of GP abolished these effects without affecting protein expression or function. GP derived from the Reston strain of virus, which causes disease in non-human primates but not in man, did not disrupt the
25 vasculature of human blood vessels. In contrast, the Zaire GP induced endothelial cell disruption and cytotoxicity in both non-human primate and human blood vessels, and the mucin domain was required for this effect. These findings indicate that GP, through its mucin domain, is the viral determinant of Ebola pathogenicity and likely contributes to hemorrhage during infection.

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Nucleic Acid Molecules

As indicated herein, nucleic acid molecules of the present invention may be in the form of RNA or in the form of DNA obtained by cloning or produced synthetically. The DNA may be double-stranded or single-stranded. Single-stranded DNA or RNA may be the coding strand, also known as the sense strand, or it may be the non-coding strand, also referred to as the anti-sense strand.

By "isolated" nucleic acid molecule(s) is intended a nucleic acid molecule, DNA or RNA, which has been removed from its native environment. For example, recombinant DNA molecules contained in a vector are considered isolated for the purposes of the present invention. Further examples of isolated DNA molecules include recombinant DNA molecules maintained in heterologous host cells or purified (partially or substantially) DNA molecules in solution. Isolated RNA molecules include *in vivo* or *in vitro* RNA transcripts of the DNA molecules of the present invention. Isolated nucleic acid molecules according to the present invention further include such molecules produced synthetically.

Nucleic acid molecules of the present invention include DNA molecules comprising an open reading frame (ORF) encoding a wild-type filovirus structural gene product; and DNA molecules which comprise a sequence substantially different from those described above but which, due to the degeneracy of the genetic code, still encode an ORF of a wild-type filovirus structural gene product. Of course, the genetic code is well known in the art.

The present invention is further directed to fragments of the nucleic acid molecules described herein. By a fragment of a nucleic acid molecule having the nucleotide sequence of an ORF encoding a wild-type filovirus structural gene product is intended fragments at least about 15 nt., and more preferably at least about 20 nt., still more preferably at least about 30 nt., and even more preferably, at least about 40 nt. in length. Of course, larger fragments 50, 100, 150, 200, 250, 300, 350, 400, 450, or 500 nt. in length are also intended according to the present invention as are fragments corresponding to most, if not all, of the nucleotide sequence of the ORF encoding a wild-type filovirus structural gene product. By a fragment at least 20 nt. in length, for example, is intended fragments which include 20 or more contiguous bases from the nucleotide sequence of the ORF of a wild-type filovirus structural gene product.

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Preferred nucleic acid fragments of the present invention include nucleic acid molecules encoding epitope-bearing portions of the filovirus structural protein. In particular, such nucleic acid fragments of the present invention include nucleic acid molecules encoding epitope-bearing domains of a filovirus structural protein, where the domain is the GP/SGP identity domain, the mucin-like domain, the furin cleavage site, the fusion peptide domain, the heptad repeat domain, the transmembrane anchor domain, and the intracellular domain, and any combination thereof, for example, a filovirus glycoprotein having a truncation at the carboxy terminus to delete the transmembrane anchor and intracellular domain, a filovirus glycoprotein having a truncation at the carboxy terminus to delete the heptad repeat domain and transmembrane anchor and intracellular domain, a filovirus glycoprotein having a truncation at the carboxy terminus to delete the fusion peptide domain, heptad repeat domain, and transmembrane anchor and intracellular domain, a filovirus glycoprotein having a truncation at the carboxy terminus to delete the furin cleavage site, fusion peptide domain, heptad repeat domain, and transmembrane anchor and intracellular domain, a filovirus glycoprotein having a truncation at the carboxy terminus to delete the mucin-like domain, furin cleavage site, fusion peptide domain, heptad repeat domain, and transmembrane anchor and intracellular domain. Another example is a filovirus glycoprotein having an amino, internal, or carboxy deletion to delete the mucin-like domain, the furin cleavage site, the fusion peptide domain, the heptad repeat domain, the transmembrane anchor domain, or the intracellular domain.

In another aspect, the invention provides a nucleic acid molecule comprising a polynucleotide which hybridizes under stringent hybridization conditions to a portion of the polynucleotide in a nucleic acid molecule of the invention described above. By "stringent hybridization conditions" is intended overnight incubation at 42°C in a solution comprising: 50% formamide, 5 x SSC (750 mM NaCl, 75 mM trisodium citrate), 50 mM sodium phosphate (pH 7.6), 5 x Denhardt's solution, 10% dextran sulfate, and 20 µg/ml denatured, sheared salmon sperm DNA, followed by washing the filters in 0.1 x SSC at about 65°C.

By a polynucleotide which hybridizes to a "portion" of a polynucleotide is intended a polynucleotide (either DNA or RNA) hybridizing to at least about 15 nucleotides (nt.),

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and more preferably at least about 20 nt., still more preferably at least about 30 nt., and even more preferably about 30-70 nt. of the reference polynucleotide.

By a portion of a polynucleotide of "at least 20 nt. in length," for example, is intended 20 or more contiguous nucleotides from the nucleotide sequence of the reference polynucleotide. Of course, a polynucleotide which hybridizes only to a poly A sequence or a complementary stretch of T (or U) residues, would not be included in a polynucleotide of the invention used to hybridize to a portion of a nucleic acid of the invention, since such a polynucleotide would hybridize to any nucleic acid molecule containing a poly A stretch or the complement thereof (e.g., practically any double-stranded cDNA clone).

As indicated herein, nucleic acid molecules of the present invention which encode a filovirus structural gene product may include, but are not limited to those encoding the amino acid sequence of the full-length polypeptide, by itself, the coding sequence for the full-length polypeptide and additional sequences, such as those encoding a leader or secretory sequence, such as a pre-, or pro- or prepro-protein sequence, the coding sequence of the full-length polypeptide, with or without the aforementioned additional coding sequences, together with additional, non-coding sequences, including for example, but not limited to introns and non-coding 5' and 3' sequences, such as the transcribed, non-translated sequences that play a role in transcription, mRNA processing, including splicing and polyadenylation signals, for example, ribosome binding and stability of mRNA; and additional coding sequence which codes for additional amino acids, such as those which provide additional functionalities.

The present invention further relates to variants of the nucleic acid molecules of the present invention, which encode portions, analogs or derivatives of the filovirus structural gene product. Variants may occur naturally, such as a natural allelic variant. By an "allelic variant" is intended one of several alternate forms of a gene occupying a given locus on a genome of an organism. (*Genes II*, Lewin, B., ed., John Wiley & Sons, 1985 New York). Non-naturally occurring variants may be produced using art-known mutagenesis techniques.

Such variants include those produced by nucleotide substitutions, deletions or additions, which may involve one or more nucleotides. The variants may be altered in coding regions, non-coding regions, or both. Alterations in the coding regions may

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produce conservative or non-conservative amino acid substitutions, deletions or additions. Especially preferred among these are silent substitutions, additions and deletions, which do not alter the properties and activities of the filovirus structural gene product or portions thereof. Also especially preferred in this regard are conservative substitutions.

5 Further embodiments of the invention include nucleic acid molecules comprising a polynucleotide having a nucleotide sequence at least 95% identical, and more preferably at least 96%, 97%, 98% or 99% identical to a nucleotide sequence encoding a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence of a wild-type filovirus structural gene product or fragment thereof or a nucleotide sequence complementary thereto.

10 By a polynucleotide having a nucleotide sequence at least, for example, 95% "identical" to a reference nucleotide sequence encoding a filovirus structural gene product is intended that the nucleotide sequence of the polynucleotide is identical to the reference sequence except that the polynucleotide sequence may include up to five point mutations per each 100 nucleotides of the reference nucleotide sequence encoding the Ebola virus
15 structural gene product. In other words, to obtain a polynucleotide having a nucleotide sequence at least 95% identical to a reference nucleotide sequence, up to 5% of the nucleotides in the reference sequence may be deleted or substituted with another nucleotide, or a number of nucleotides up to 5% of the total nucleotides in the reference sequence may be inserted into the reference sequence. These mutations of the reference sequence may
20 occur at the 5' or 3' terminal positions of the reference nucleotide sequence or anywhere between those terminal positions, interspersed either individually among nucleotides in the reference sequence or in one or more contiguous groups within the reference sequence.

As a practical matter, whether any particular nucleic acid molecule is at least 95%, 96%, 97%, 98% or 99% identical to the reference nucleotide sequence can be determined
25 conventionally using known computer programs such as the Bestfit program (Wisconsin Sequence Analysis Package, Version 8 for Unix, Genetics Computer Group, University Research Park, 575 Science Drive, Madison, Wis. 53711). Bestfit uses the local homology algorithm of Smith and Waterman, 1981 *Advances in Applied Mathematics* 2:482-489, to find the best segment of homology between two sequences. When using Bestfit or any
30 other sequence alignment program to determine whether a particular sequence is, for instance, 95% identical to a reference sequence according to the present invention, the

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parameters are set, of course, such that the percentage of identity is calculated over the full length of the reference nucleotide sequence and that gaps in homology of up to 5% of the total number of nucleotides in the reference sequence are allowed.

The present application is directed to nucleic acid molecules at least 95%, 96%,
5 97%, 98% or 99% identical to the nucleic acid sequences shown herein in the Sequence Listing which encode a polypeptide having Ebola, Marburg, or Lassa virus polypeptide activity. By "a polypeptide having Ebola, Marburg, or Lassa virus polypeptide activity" is intended polypeptides exhibiting Ebola, Marburg, or Lassa virus polypeptide activity in a particular biological assay. For example, GP, SGP or NP protein activity can be measured
10 for changes in immunological character by an appropriate immunological assay.

Of course, due to the degeneracy of the genetic code, one of ordinary skill in the art will immediately recognize that a large number of the nucleic acid molecules having a sequence at least 95%, 96%, 97%, 98%, or 99% identical to a nucleic acid sequence shown herein in the Sequence Listing will encode a polypeptide "having Ebola, Marburg, or Lassa
15 virus polypeptide activity". In fact, since degenerate variants of these nucleotide sequences all encode the same polypeptide, this will be clear to the skilled artisan even without performing the above described comparison assay. It will be further recognized in the art that, for such nucleic acid molecules that are not degenerate variants, a reasonable number will also encode a polypeptide having Ebola, Marburg, or Lassa virus polypeptide activity.
20 This is because the skilled artisan is fully aware of amino acid substitutions that are either less likely or not likely to significantly effect protein function (e.g., replacing one aliphatic amino acid with a second aliphatic amino acid).

For example, guidance concerning how to make phenotypically silent amino acid substitutions is provided in Bowie, J. U. *et al.* 1990 *Science* 247:1306-1310, wherein the
25 authors indicate that proteins are surprisingly tolerant of amino acid substitutions.

Polypeptides and Fragments

The invention further provides a filovirus polypeptide having the amino acid sequence encoded by an open reading frame (ORF) of a wild-type filovirus structural gene, or a peptide or polypeptide comprising a portion thereof (e.g., SGP).

30 It will be recognized in the art that some amino acid sequences of the filovirus polypeptides can be varied without significant effect of the structure or function of the

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protein. If such differences in sequence are contemplated, it should be remembered that there will be critical areas on the protein which determine activity.

Thus, the invention further includes variations of the filovirus polypeptide which show substantial filovirus polypeptide activity or which include regions of filovirus protein
5 such as the protein portions discussed below. Such mutants include deletions, insertions, inversions, repeats, and type substitutions. As indicated, guidance concerning which amino acid changes are likely to be phenotypically silent can be found in Bowie, J.U. *et al.* 1990 *Science* 247:1306-1310.

Thus, the fragment, derivative or analog of the polypeptide of the invention may be
10 (i) one in which one or more of the amino acid residues are substituted with a conserved or non-conserved amino acid residue (preferably a conserved amino acid residue) and such substituted amino acid residue may or may not be one encoded by the genetic code, or (ii) one in which one or more of the amino acid residues include a substituent group, or (iii) one in which additional amino acids are fused to the mature polypeptide, such as an IgG Fc
15 fusion region peptide or leader or secretory sequence or a sequence which is employed for purification of the mature polypeptide or a proprotein sequence. Such fragments, derivatives and analogs are deemed to be within the scope of those skilled in the art from the teachings herein.

As indicated, changes are preferably of a minor nature, such as conservative amino
20 acid substitutions that do not significantly affect the folding or activity of the protein (see Table A).

Table A. Conservative Amino Acid Substitutions

Aromatic	Phenylalanine Tryptophan Tyrosine
Ionizable: Acidic	Aspartic Acid Glutamic Acid
Ionizable: Basic	Arginine Histidine Lysine
Nonionizable Polar	Asparagine Glutamine Selenocystine Serine Threonine
Nonpolar (Hydrophobic)	Alanine Glycine Isoleucine Leucine Proline Valine
Sulfur Containing	Cysteine Methionine

Of course, the number of amino acid substitutions a skilled artisan would make depends on many factors, including those described above. Generally speaking, the number of amino acid substitutions for any given filovirus polypeptide will not be more than 50, 40, 30, 20, 10, 5 or 3.

Amino acids in the filovirus polypeptides of the present invention that are essential for function can be identified by methods known in the art, such as site-directed mutagenesis or alanine-scanning mutagenesis (Cunningham & Wells 1989 *Science* 244:1081-1085). The latter procedure introduces single alanine mutations at every residue in the molecule. The resulting mutant molecules are then tested for biological activity such as changes in immunological character.

The polypeptides of the present invention are conveniently provided in an isolated form. By "isolated polypeptide" is intended a polypeptide removed from its native environment. Thus, a polypeptide produced and/or contained within a recombinant host cell is considered isolated for purposes of the present invention. Also intended as an "isolated polypeptide" are polypeptides that have been purified, partially or substantially,

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from a recombinant host cell or a native source. For example, a recombinantly produced version of the filovirus polypeptide can be substantially purified by the one-step method described in Smith and Johnson 1988 *Gene* 67:31-40.

5 The polypeptides of the present invention include a polypeptide comprising a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence of a wild-type filovirus structural gene product or portion thereof or encoded by a nucleic acid sequence shown herein in the Sequence Listing; as well as polypeptides which are at least 95% identical, and more preferably at least 96%, 97%, 98%, or 99% identical to those described above.

10 By a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence at least, for example, 95% "identical" to a reference amino acid sequence of an filovirus polypeptide is intended that the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide is identical to the reference sequence except that the polypeptide sequence may include up to five amino acid alterations per each 100 amino acids of the reference amino acid of the filovirus polypeptide. In other words, to obtain a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence at least 95% identical to a reference amino acid sequence, up to 5% of the amino acid residues in the reference sequence may be
15 deleted or substituted with another amino acid, or a number of amino acids up to 5% of the total amino acid residues in the reference sequence may be inserted into the reference sequence. These alterations of the reference sequence may occur at the amino or carboxy terminal positions of the reference amino acid sequence or anywhere between those
20 terminal positions, interspersed either individually among residues in the reference sequence or in one or more contiguous groups within the reference sequence.

As a practical matter, whether any particular polypeptide is at least 95%, 96%, 97%, 98%, or 99% identical to a reference amino acid sequence can be determined conventionally using known computer programs such the Bestfit program (Wisconsin
25 Sequence Analysis Package, Version 8 for Unix, Genetics Computer Group, University Research Park, 575 Science Drive, Madison, Wis. 53711). When using Bestfit or any other sequence alignment program to determine whether a particular sequence is, for instance, 95% identical to a reference sequence according to the present invention, the parameters are set, of course, such that the percentage of identity is calculated over the full length of the
30 reference amino acid sequence and that gaps in homology of up to 5% of the total number of amino acid residues in the reference sequence are allowed.

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In another aspect, the invention provides portions of the polypeptides described herein with at least 30 amino acids and more preferably at least 50 amino acids. Preferred portions of the present invention include polypeptides comprising an epitope-bearing portion of a filovirus structural protein. In particular, preferred portions of the present invention include polypeptides comprising an epitope-bearing domain of a filovirus structural protein, where the domain is the GP/SGP identity domain, the mucin-like domain, the furin cleavage site, the fusion peptide domain, the heptad repeat domain, the transmembrane anchor domain, and the intracellular domain, and any combination thereof, for example, a filovirus glycoprotein having a truncation at the carboxy terminus to delete the transmembrane anchor and intracellular domain, a filovirus glycoprotein having a truncation at the carboxy terminus to delete the heptad repeat domain and transmembrane anchor and intracellular domain, a filovirus glycoprotein having a truncation at the carboxy terminus to delete the fusion peptide domain, heptad repeat domain, and transmembrane anchor and intracellular domain, a filovirus glycoprotein having a truncation at the carboxy terminus to delete the furin cleavage site, fusion peptide domain, heptad repeat domain, and transmembrane anchor and intracellular domain, and a filovirus glycoprotein having a truncation at the carboxy terminus to delete the mucin-like domain, furin cleavage site, fusion peptide domain, heptad repeat domain, and transmembrane anchor and intracellular domain. Another example is a filovirus glycoprotein having an amino, internal, or carboxy deletion to delete the mucin-like domain, the furin cleavage site, the fusion peptide domain, the heptad repeat domain, the transmembrane anchor domain, or the intracellular domain.

The polypeptides of the invention may be produced by any conventional means (Houghten, R.A. 1985 *PNAS USA* 82:5131-5135). The "Simultaneous Multiple Peptide Synthesis (SMPS)" process is described in U.S. Pat. No. 4,631,211 to Houghten *et al.* (1986).

The present invention also relates to vectors which include the nucleic acid molecules of the present invention, host cells which are genetically engineered with the recombinant vectors, and the production of filovirus polypeptides or fragments thereof by recombinant techniques.

The present invention relates to "prime and boost" immunization regimes in which the immune response induced by administration of a priming composition is boosted by

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administration of a boosting composition. The present invention is based on the inventors' experimental demonstration that effective boosting can be achieved using replication-defective adenovirus vectors, following priming with any of a variety of different types of priming compositions. The present invention employs replication-deficient adenovirus
5 which, as the experiments described below show, has been found to be an effective means for providing a boost to an immune response primed to antigen using any of a variety of different priming compositions.

Replication-deficient adenovirus derived from human serotype 5 has been developed as a live viral vector by Graham and colleagues (Graham & Prevec 1995 *Mol*
10 *Biotechnol* 3:207-20; Bett *et al.* 1994 *PNAS USA* 91:8802-6). Adenoviruses are non-enveloped viruses containing a linear double-stranded DNA genome of around 3600 bp. Recombinant viruses can be constructed by *in vitro* recombination between an adenovirus genome plasmid and a shuttle vector containing the gene of interest together with a strong eukaryotic promoter, in a permissive cell line which allows viral replication. High viral
15 titres can be obtained from the permissive cell line, but the resulting viruses, although capable of infecting a wide range of cell types, do not replicate in any cells other than the permissive line, and are therefore a safe antigen delivery system. Recombinant adenoviruses have been shown to elicit protective immune responses against a number of antigens including tick-borne encephalitis virus NS1 protein (Jacobs *et al.* 1992 *J Virol*
20 66:2086-95) and measles virus nucleoprotein (Fooks *et al.* 1995 *Virology* 210:456-65).

Remarkably, the experimental work described below demonstrates that use of embodiments of the present invention allows for recombinant replication-defective adenovirus expressing an antigen to boost an immune response primed by a DNA vaccine. The replication-defective adenovirus was found to induce an immune response after
25 intramuscular immunization. In prime/boost vaccination regimes the replication-defective adenovirus is also envisioned as being able to prime a response that can be boosted by a different recombinant virus or recombinantly produced antigen.

Non-human primates immunized with plasmid DNA and boosted with replication-defective adenovirus were protected against challenge. Both recombinant replication-deficient adenovirus and plasmid DNA are vaccines that are safe for use in humans.
30 Advantageously, the inventors found that a vaccination regime used intramuscular

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immunization for both prime and boost can be employed, constituting a general immunization regime suitable for inducing an immune response, e.g., in humans.

The present invention in various aspects and embodiments employs a replication-deficient adenovirus vector encoding an antigen for boosting an immune response to the antigen primed by previous administration of the antigen or nucleic acid encoding the antigen.

A general aspect of the present invention provides for the use of a replication-deficient adenoviral vector for boosting an immune response to an antigen.

One aspect of the present invention provides a method of boosting an immune response to an antigen in an individual, the method including provision in the individual of a replication-deficient adenoviral vector including nucleic acid encoding the antigen operably linked to regulatory sequences for production of antigen in the individual by expression from the nucleic acid, whereby an immune response to the antigen previously primed in the individual is boosted.

An immune response to an antigen may be primed by genetic immunization, by infection with an infectious agent, or by recombinantly produced antigen.

A further aspect of the invention provides a method of inducing an immune response to an antigen in an individual, the method comprising administering to the individual a priming composition comprising the antigen or nucleic acid encoding the antigen and then administering a boosting composition which comprises a replication-deficient adenoviral vector including nucleic acid encoding the antigen operably linked to regulatory sequences for production of antigen in the individual by expression from the nucleic acid.

A further aspect provides for use of a replication-deficient adenoviral vector, as disclosed, in the manufacture of a medicament for administration to a mammal to boost an immune response to an antigen. Such a medicament is generally for administration following prior administration of a priming composition comprising the antigen.

The priming composition may comprise any viral vector, including adenoviral, or other than adenoviral, such as a vaccinia virus vector such as a replication-deficient strain such as modified virus Ankara (MVA) (Mayr *et al.* 1978 *Zentralbl Bakteriol* 167:375-90; Sutter and Moss 1992 *PNAS USA* 89:10847-51; Sutter *et al.* 1994 *Vaccine* 12:1032-40) or

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NYVAC (Tartaglia *et al.* 1992 *Virology* 118:217-32), an avipox vector such as fowlpox or canarypox, e.g., the strain known as ALVAC (Kanapox, Paoletti *et al.* 1994 *Dev Biol Stand* 1994 82:65-9), or a herpes virus vector.

5 The priming composition may comprise DNA encoding the antigen, such DNA preferably being in the form of a circular plasmid that is not capable of replicating in mammalian cells. Any selectable marker should not be resistant to an antibiotic used clinically, so for example Kanamycin resistance is preferred to Ampicillin resistance. Antigen expression should be driven by a promoter which is active in mammalian cells, for instance the cytomegalovirus immediate early (CMV IE) promoter.

10 In particular embodiments of the various aspects of the present invention, administration of a priming composition is followed by boosting with first and second boosting compositions, the first and second boosting compositions being the same or different from one another, e.g., as exemplified below. Still further boosting compositions may be employed without departing from the present invention. In one embodiment, a
15 triple immunization regime employs DNA, then adenovirus (Ad) as a first boosting composition, and then MVA as a second boosting composition, optionally followed by a further (third) boosting composition or subsequent boosting administration of one or other or both of the same or different vectors. Another option is DNA then MVA then Ad, optionally followed by subsequent boosting administration of one or other or both of the
20 same or different vectors.

The antigen to be included in respective priming and boosting compositions (however many boosting compositions are employed) need not be identical, but should share epitopes. The antigen may correspond to a complete antigen in a target pathogen or cell, or a fragment thereof. Peptide epitopes or artificial strings of epitopes may be
25 employed, more efficiently cutting out unnecessary protein sequence in the antigen and encoding sequence in the vector or vectors. One or more additional epitopes may be included, for instance epitopes which are recognized by T helper cells, especially epitopes recognized in individuals of different HLA types.

Within the replication-deficient adenoviral vector, regulatory sequences for
30 expression of the encoded antigen will include a promoter. By "promoter" is meant a sequence of nucleotides from which transportation may be initiated of DNA operably

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linked downstream (i.e. in the 3' direction on the sense strand of double-stranded DNA). "Operably linked" means joined as part of the same nucleic acid molecule, suitably positioned and oriented for transcription to be initiated from the promoter. DNA operably linked to a promoter is "under transcriptional initiation regulation" of the promoter. Other
5 regulatory sequences including terminator fragments, polyadenylation sequences, enhancer sequences, marker genes, internal ribosome entry site (IRES) and other sequences may be included as appropriate, in accordance with the knowledge and practice of the ordinary person skilled in the art: see, for example, *Molecular Cloning: a Laboratory Manual*, 2nd edition, Sambrook *et al.* 1989 Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press. Many known
10 techniques and protocols for manipulation of nucleic acid, for example in preparation of nucleic acid constructs, mutagenesis, sequencing, introduction of DNA into cells and gene expression, and analysis of proteins, are described in detail in *Current Protocols in Molecular Biology*, Ausubel *et al.* eds., John Wiley & Sons, 1994.

Suitable promoters for use in aspects and embodiments of the present invention
15 include the cytomegalovirus immediate early (CMV IE) promoter, with or without intron A, and any other promoter that is active in mammalian cells.

Either or both of the priming and boosting compositions may include an adjuvant or cytokine, such as alpha-interferon, gamma-interferon, platelet-derived growth factor (PDGF), granulocyte macrophage-colony stimulating factor (GM-CSF) granulocyte-colony
20 stimulating factor (gCSF), tumor necrosis factor (TNF), epidermal growth factor (EGF), IL-1, IL-2, IL-4, IL-6, IL-8, IL-10 and IL-12, or encoding nucleic acid therefor.

Administration of the boosting composition is generally weeks or months after administration of the priming composition, preferably about 2-3 weeks or 4 weeks, or 8 weeks, or 16 weeks, or 20 weeks, or 24 weeks, or 28 weeks, or 32 weeks.

25 Preferably, administration of priming composition, boosting composition, or both priming and boosting compositions, is intramuscular immunization.

Intramuscular administration of adenovirus vaccines or plasmid DNA may be achieved by using a needle to inject a suspension of the virus or plasmid DNA. An alternative is the use of a needleless injection device to administer a virus or plasmid DNA
30 suspension (using, e.g., Biojector™) or a freeze-dried powder containing the vaccine (e.g., in accordance with techniques and products of Powderject), providing for manufacturing

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individually prepared doses that do not need cold storage. This would be a great advantage for a vaccine that is needed in rural areas of Africa.

Adenovirus is a virus with an excellent safety record in human immunizations. The generation of recombinant viruses can be accomplished simply, and they can be
5 manufactured reproducibly in large quantities. Intramuscular administration of recombinant replication-deficient adenovirus is therefore highly suitable for prophylactic or therapeutic vaccination of humans against diseases which can be controlled by an immune response.

The individual may have a disease or disorder such that delivery of the antigen and
10 generation of an immune response to the antigen is of benefit or has a therapeutically beneficial effect.

Most likely, administration will have prophylactic aim to generate an immune response against a pathogen or disease before infection or development of symptoms.

Diseases and disorders that may be treated or prevented in accordance with the
15 present invention include those in which an immune response may play a protective or therapeutic role.

Components to be administered in accordance with the present invention may be formulated in pharmaceutical compositions. These compositions may comprise a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient, carrier, buffer, stabilizer or other materials well
20 known to those skilled in the art. Such materials should be non-toxic and should not interfere with the efficacy of the active ingredient. The precise nature of the carrier or other material may depend on the route of administration, e.g., intravenous, cutaneous or subcutaneous, intramucosal (e.g., gut), intranasal, intramuscular, or intraperitoneal routes.

As noted, administration is preferably intradermal, subcutaneous or intramuscular.

25 Liquid pharmaceutical compositions generally include a liquid carrier such as water, petroleum, animal or vegetable oils, mineral oil or synthetic oil. Physiological saline solution, dextrose or other saccharide solution or glycols such as ethylene glycol, propylene glycol or polyethylene glycol may be included.

For intravenous, cutaneous or subcutaneous injection, or injection at the site of
30 affliction, the active ingredient will be in the form of a parenterally acceptable aqueous solution which is pyrogen-free and has suitable pH, isotonicity and stability. Those of

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relevant skill in the art are well able to prepare suitable solutions using, for example, isotonic vehicles such as Sodium Chloride Injection, Ringer's Injection, Lactated Ringer's Injection. Preservatives, stabilizers, buffers, antioxidants and/or other additives may be included, as required.

5 A slow-release formulation may be employed.

Following production of replication-deficient adenoviral particles and optional formulation of such particles into compositions, the particles may be administered to an individual, particularly human or other primate.

Administration may be to another mammal, e.g., rodent such as mouse, rat or
10 hamster, guinea pig, rabbit, sheep, goat, pig, horse, cow, donkey, dog or cat.

Administration is preferably in a "prophylactically effective amount" or a "therapeutically effective amount" (as the case may be, although prophylaxis may be considered therapy), this being sufficient to show benefit to the individual. The actual
• amount administered, and rate and time-course of administration, will depend on the nature
15 and severity of what is being treated. Prescription of treatment, e.g., decisions on dosage etc., is within the responsibility of general practitioners and other medical doctors, or in a veterinary context a veterinarian, and typically takes account of the disorder to be treated, the condition of the individual patient, the site of delivery, the method of administration and other factors known to practitioners. Examples of the techniques and protocols
20 mentioned above can be found in *Remington's Pharmaceutical Sciences*, 16th edition, Osol, A. ed., 1980.

In one preferred regimen, DNA is administered (preferably intramuscularly) at a dose of 10 micrograms to 50 milligrams/injection, followed by adenovirus (preferably intramuscularly) at a dose of 5×10^7 - 1×10^{12} particles/injection.

25 The composition may, if desired, be presented in a kit, pack or dispenser, which may contain one or more unit dosage forms containing the active ingredient. The kit, for example, may comprise metal or plastic foil, such as a blister pack. The kit, pack, or dispenser may be accompanied by instructions for administration.

A composition may be administered alone or in combination with other treatments,
30 either simultaneously or sequentially dependent upon the condition to be treated.

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Delivery to a non-human mammal need not be for a therapeutic purpose, but may be for use in an experimental context, for instance in investigation of mechanisms of immune responses to an antigen of interest, e.g., protection against disease.

Further aspects and embodiments of the present invention will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art, in view of the above disclosure and following experimental exemplification, included by way of illustration and not limitation, and with reference to the attached figures.

Development of a Preventive Vaccine for Ebola Virus Infection in Primates

Genetic immunization has been shown to influence both humoral and cellular immune activation pathways and to protect against infection by human pathogens (Tang, D.C. *et al.* 1992 *Nature* 356:152-154; Ulmer, J.B. *et al.* 1993 *Science* 259:1745-1749; Wang, B. *et al.* 1993 *PNAS USA* 90:4156-4160; Sedegah, M. *et al.* 1994 *PNAS USA* 91:9866-9870). The effectiveness of plasmid vaccines is thought to result from host cell protein synthesis and endogenous presentation of the immunogen, and possibly to immunostimulatory effects of plasmid DNA itself (Krieg, A.M. *et al.* 1995 *Nature* 374:546-549; Sato, Y. *et al.* 1996 *Science* 273:352-354). DNA vaccines have been shown to elicit specific immune responses to Ebola virus antigens and to protect guinea pigs (Xu, L. *et al.* 1998 *Nat Med* 4:7-42) and mice (Vanderzanden, L. *et al.* 1998 *Virology* 246:134-144) against challenge with Ebola virus adapted to produce lethal infection in rodents (Connolly, B.M. *et al.* 1999 *J Infect Dis* 179:S203-S217; Bray, M. *et al.* 1998 *J Infect Dis* 178:651-661). Although both cell-mediated and humoral immune responses were elicited, antibody titer correlated with the degree of protection in animals immunized with plasmids encoding proteins from the Zaire subtype of Ebola virus.

A broadly effective vaccine would need to provide immunity to the multiple Ebola subtypes isolated in human infections (Zaire, Sudan and Ivory Coast), but a multivalent vaccine might dilute the specific immune response demonstrated for the single subtype vaccine. To address this concern, we analyzed the efficacy of the original Ebola Zaire DNA vaccine in comparison to its use in combination with DNA from Ebola subtypes Sudan and Ivory Coast. As in a previous study (Xu, L. *et al.* 1998 *Nat Med* 4:7-42), immunization with a single plasmid encoding Zaire subtype virion glycoprotein, GP(Z), generated a substantial virus-specific antibody response and conferred protective immunity

in guinea pigs (Table I). Inclusion of a plasmid expressing Ebola nucleoprotein, NP, did not affect the antibody titer to Ebola GP(Z) or diminish its protective efficacy. Further broadening of the vaccine components to include NP and three subtypes of Ebola glycoprotein, Zaire, Ivory Coast and Sudan, GP(Z,IC,S)+NP, yielded a pre-challenge
5 immune response comparable to the single-plasmid vaccine. Moreover, complete protection from infection with Ebola Zaire was achieved in guinea pigs that received the multivalent vaccine (Table I, subjects 13-16). Anamnestic antibody was not induced by the virus challenge, indicating that the vaccine itself provided an immune response sufficient to efficiently clear the virus. These findings show that multivalent plasmid immunization did
10 not substantially diminish glycoprotein (GP)-specific antibody production and its protective efficacy in a rodent model.

Table I. Multivalent genetic immunization in guinea pigs

ID	Immunization	ELISA IgG	Survival
1	Plasmid	0	No
2	Plasmid	0	No
3	Plasmid	0	No
4	Plasmid	0	No
5	GP(Z)	6400	Yes
6	GP(Z)	6400	Yes
7	GP(Z)	6400	Yes
8	GP(Z)	3200	Yes
9	GP(Z) + NP	6400	Yes
10	GP(Z) + NP	6400	Yes
11	GP(Z) + NP	6400	Yes
12	GP(Z) + NP	6400	Yes
13	GP(Z,IC,S) + NP	6400	Yes
14	GP(Z,IC,S) + NP	1600	Yes
15	GP(Z,IC,S) + NP	6400	Yes
16	GP(Z,IC,S) + NP	6400	Yes

Table I. Comparison of multivalent vs. monovalent genetic immunization in guinea pigs. Guinea pigs were immunized intramuscularly three times at two-week intervals with 100 µg of DNA (Plasmid, 100 µg p1012; GP(Z), 100 µg pGP(Z); GP(Z) + NP, 75 µg pGP(Z) and 25 µg pNP; GP(Z, IC, S) + NP, 25 µg each of pGP(Z), pGP(IC), pGP(S) and pNP). Serum was collected 6 weeks after the first injection and pre-challenge
15 titers for antibody to Ebola GP (ELISA IgG) were measured by ELISA (Ksiazek, T.G. *et al.* 1992 *J Clin Microbiol* 30:947-950) and are displayed as the reciprocal endpoint dilution.

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Three months after the final immunization the animals were challenged as described (Xu, L. *et al.* 1998 *Nat Med* 4:37-42).

Because protection in the rodent model of Ebola virus infection correlated with antibody titers, and efficient humoral responses may influence clinical outcome in human disease (Baize, S. *et al.* 1999 *Nat Med* 5:423-426; Maruyama, T. *et al.* 1999 *J Virol* 73:6024-6030), we considered it important to elicit a strong humoral response for vaccines tested in primates, although cell-mediated immunity is coordinately induced and likely contributes to protection (Xu, L. *et al.* 1998 *Nat Med* 4:37-42). Recently, regimens of DNA priming followed by administration of viral vectors have demonstrated enhanced immune responses compared to vaccines using DNA alone (Sedegah, M. *et al.* 1998 *PNAS USA* 95:7648-7653; Hanke, T. *et al.* 1998 *Vaccine* 16:439-445; Robinson, H.L. *et al.* 1999 *Nat Med* 5:526-534; Schneider, J. *et al.* 1998 *Nat Med* 4:397-402). Recombinant, replication-deficient adenoviruses can be grown to high titer, infect antigen-presenting cells, and induce potent immune responses (Davis, A.R. *et al.* 1985 *PNAS USA* 82:7560-7564; Natuk, R.J. *et al.* 1992 *PNAS USA* 89:7777-7781; Xiang, Z.Q. *et al.* 1996 *Virology* 219:220-227). Adenoviruses have shown a boosting effect in mice (Xiang, Z.Q. *et al.* 1999 *J Immunol* 162:6716-6723), but the combination of DNA and adenovirus has not been tested for efficacy in an infectious challenge model, and the success of this approach in primates is yet unknown. We therefore developed a recombinant adenoviral vector that directs high level GP expression ADV-GP(Z) and used this vector to test whether a modified prime-boost strategy would augment the antibody response to Ebola virus obtained with naked DNA alone. Mice were injected with DNA and adenovirus vectors either singly or in combinations, and cell-mediated and humoral immune responses were assessed. A 10- to 100-fold increase in antibody titer was found in mice injected with DNA followed by an adenovirus boost, compared to DNA immunization alone (Fig. 47). An increase in cytotoxic T cell responses was also observed with this combination. Immunization with ADV-GP(Z) alone yielded antibody titers that were not significantly different from those obtained with the DNA prime, adenovirus boost immunization. These data suggest that immunogenicity of the Ebola GP DNA vaccine in mice is improved by boosting with recombinant adenovirus and that this strategy might represent a useful approach to enhance immune responses in non-human primates.

Whereas the rodent model has been useful in the development of a vaccine strategy, Ebola virus isolated directly from humans must first be adapted by multiple, sequential passage in rodents in order to produce a lethal infection in mice or guinea pigs (Connolly, B.M. *et al.* 1999 *J Infect Dis* 179:S203-S217; Bray, M. *et al.* 1998 *J Infect Dis* 178:651-661). Primate models of Ebola infection are thought to have a stronger predictive value for human disease and immune protection. We therefore conducted studies in non-human primates using a bimodal DNA/ADV vaccine and the multiple plasmid strategy that correlated with protection in guinea pigs. Cynomolgus macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*) received 3 injections of naked DNA vectors at 4-week intervals (Fig. 48A) and, after several months of rest which has been shown to boost immune responses (Letvin, N.L. *et al.* 1997 *PNAS USA* 94:9378-9383), were boosted with recombinant adenovirus expressing only the Zaire glycoprotein (Fig. 48A). Control animals received empty vectors (plasmid DNA and ADV- Δ E1 recombinant adenovirus), and vaccinated animals received the multicomponent DNA vaccine containing NP and three subtypes of Ebola GP (pGP/NP), followed by ADV-GP(Z). As expected, anti-Ebola serum antibodies could not be detected in control animals, but in animals receiving the Ebola vaccine, an antigen-specific antibody response was detected at week 12, one month after the third DNA injection (Fig. 48B). After boosting with recombinant adenovirus, antibody titers increased 10- to 20-fold over the levels obtained with DNA alone. Three months after the final immunization, antibody levels remained high, except for one animal (subject 8) whose titer dropped slightly from 5×10^4 to 1.3×10^4 .

Primate cellular responses to Ebola antigens were next examined with an *in vitro* lymphocyte proliferation assay. In control monkeys, antigen-specific lymphocyte proliferation, measured by ^3H -thymidine uptake, was equivalent to that in matched, unstimulated cells, resulting in a proliferation index near 1.0 for each animal (Fig. 48C). In contrast, peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMC) from animals immunized with the multivalent vaccine showed 9- to 20-fold increased stimulation, demonstrating a robust immune response to Ebola antigen at the cellular level. Depletion of CD4-positive lymphocytes reduced the antigen-stimulated proliferative response of PBMC from vaccinated monkeys to the level observed in control animals (Fig. 48D). Depletion of CD8-positive lymphocytes, however, did not affect Ebola antigen-specific lymphocyte

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proliferation. Therefore, the CD4-positive subset of lymphocytes, which provide the T cell help required for high antibody titers, contributes to the vaccine-induced cellular immune response.

To determine the protective efficacy of this vaccination regimen, monkeys were
5 challenged with a lethal dose of the wild-type Mayinga strain from the Zaire subtype of Ebola virus. In the control monkeys, blood chemistry revealed an increase in hepatic enzymes (Figure 49A, B) that is characteristic for Ebola virus infection (Fisher-Hoch, S.P. *et al.* 1985 *J Infect Dis* 152:887-894). No such increase was observed in vaccinated subjects. The elevation of serum alanine aminotransferase (ALT) and aspartate
10 aminotransferase (AST) was parallel to a dramatic increase in viraemia in all of the control animals (Figure 49C). In contrast, no substantial increase in viral load was observed in vaccinated monkeys. The kinetics of disease progression was similar among the control animals, and the disease incidence was 100% in this group. Death occurred between days 5 and 6 for 3 animals, and the last monkey, moribund, was euthanized on day 7. In contrast,
15 4 out of 4 monkeys immunized with the combination DNA-adenovirus vaccine survived this lethal challenge of Ebola virus, and sterilizing immunity was achieved in 3 out of 4 subjects. The remaining animal showed a small transient rise in viral antigen; however, when followed long-term, all vaccinated animals showed no signs or symptoms of infection, and there was no detectable viraemia for more than 6 months after infection, as
20 measured by ELISA detection of viral antigen (Fig. 49A) and end point titration analysis of cultured virus. The vaccine recipient (subject 8) that exhibited a transient low level of viraemia on day 10 returned to undetectable levels by day 17.

As the natural reservoir for Ebola virus is unknown, the potential for traditional public health measures to prevent future outbreaks is limited, thus increasing the urgency
25 for the development of a vaccine and therapeutics in humans. The present findings demonstrate that primates can be immunized against the lethal effects of Ebola virus infection, and that sterilizing immunity can be achieved using a heterologous prime-boost strategy. A multicomponent genetic vaccine expressing Ebola virus structural proteins from diverse geographic isolates generated a strong antigen-specific immune response and
30 resulted in the survival of immunized primates after challenge with a lethal dose of Ebola Zaire, the subtype of this virus associated with the highest number of deaths in human

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infections. The results of this study suggest that T-cell mediated and humoral immunity contribute to virus clearance in non-human primates, consistent with previous studies in rodents (Xu, L. *et al.* 1998 *Nat Med* 4:37-42; Wilson, J. *et al.* 2000 *Science* 287:1664-1666). Two immune parameters, antibody titer (1:75,000 vs. <1:100, $P = 0.001$) and the
 5 cellular proliferative response (~12-fold vs. 1.4-fold, $P = 0.0014$), provided highly significant immune correlates of protection. Studies investigating the correlates of immune protection from Ebola virus infection in humans are hampered by the aggressive nature of the virus and necessarily high level of biosafety containment. With the model of primate immunity presented here, it is envisioned as now being possible to elucidate the
 10 mechanisms of immune protection from Ebola virus infection, to advance immune-based anti-viral therapies, and to develop a human vaccine for this pathogen and even other infectious causes of hemorrhagic fever.

DESCRIPTIONS OF EBOLA, MARBURG, AND LASSA CONSTRUCTS

- VRC 6000** VRC6000 (pVR1012-GP(Z)).
 15 Backbone, pVR1012 (#450) expressing Ebola Glycoprotein of Zaire Subtype. Orientation is *BamHI/EcoRI/EcoRV/EcoRI/BglII*)
- VRC 6001** VRC6001 (pVR1012x/s-GP(Z)) No other description.
 This is the same as 6000, with the addition of an *Sfi* restriction site to the pVR1012 backbone.
- 20 **VRC 6002** VRC6002 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta MUC).
 The mucin-like domain of GP(Z) was deleted. 530 bp in the backbone, pVR1012 GP(Z) were deleted from *EarI*(2844) to *BfaI*(3374). This mutant can bind to the Ebola receptor.
- VRC 6003** VRC6003 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta MUC delta FUR).
 25 The mucin-like domain and furin-cleavage site of GP(Z) were deleted. 593 bp in the backbone, pVR1012 GP (Z) were deleted, from *EarI*(2844) to *EarI*(3437). The protein has properties similar to pVR1012-GP(Z) delta MUC.
- VRC 6004** VRC6004 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2).

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A majority of the GP2 region in GP(Z) was deleted. 430 bp from the backbone, pVR1012-GP (Z) were deleted from *Bcl*II(3414) to *Bsp*EI(3844). The TM (transmembrane) region was retained.

VRC 6005 VRC6005 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2 delta C-term A).

5 This is a C-terminal deletion of GP2. 267 bp were deleted from the pVR1012-GP (Z) backbone, from *Msc*I(3623) to *Bsp*MI(3890).

VRC 6006 VRC6006 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2 delta C-term B).

This is a smaller deletion of GP2 C-terminal. 110 bp of backbone pVR1012-GP(Z) were deleted from *Bst*XI(3780) to *Bsp*MI(3890).

10 **VRC 6007** VRC6007 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta GP2 delta FUS).

The fusion peptide in GP2 of GP(Z) was deleted in this mutant, using PCR. 47 bp from the backbone, pVR1012-GP(Z), was deleted from (3508-3555).

VRC 6008 VRC6008 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta TM).

15 The TM region of GP(Z) was truncated in this mutant. A stop codon (TGA) was added downstream of the *Bsp*MI site(3889). This protein is secreted and doesn't form a trimer.

VRC 6052 VRC 6052 (pVR1012-GP(Z) delta sGP).

20 The majority of the SGP/GP homology region was deleted. 687 bp from the backbone, pVR1012-GP(Z), were deleted from *Hinc*II(2083) to *Hinc*II(2270).

VRC 6101 VRC 6101 (pVR1012x/s Ebola GP(R) (dTM)).

25 The vector expresses Ebola glycoprotein (subtype Reston) without its transmembrane and intracellular domains. Using PCR, a stop codon was generated downstream of a.a. 650 of GP(R), followed by an *Xba*I site. This protein can be secreted and is termed GP(R)(dTM).

VRC 6110 VRC 6110 (pAdApt Ebola GP(R) (dTM)).

30 An adenoviral shuttle vector expressing Ebola virus glycoprotein (Reston subtype) without its transmembrane and intracellular domains. Using PCR, a stop codon was generated downstream of a.a. 651 of GP(Reston), followed by an *Xba*I site. The resulting recombinant adenovirus expresses a 651 a.a. secreted glycoprotein termed GP(R)(dTM).

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- VRC 6200** VRC6200 (pVR1012-GP(S)).
Backbone, pVR1012(#450), expressing Ebola Glycoprotein of the Sudan Subtype. Orientation is *EcoRI/EcoRV/BamHI/BamHI/BamHI/XbaI*.
- VRC 6201** VRC 6201 (pVR1012x/s Ebola GP(S)).
5 No other description, but this is the same as 6200 with the addition of an Sfi site to the 1012 backbone.
- VRC 6202** VRC6202 (pVR1012-GP(S) delta TM).
The TM region of GP(S) was truncated in this mutant. A stop codon (TGA) was added downstream of the *BspMI* site(xxx). This protein is secreted and
10 doesn't form a trimer.
- VRC 6300** VRC6300 (pVR1012-GP(IC)).
Backbone, pVR1012(#450), expressing Ebola Glycoprotein of the Ivory Coast Subtype. Orientation is *EcoRI/EcoRV/BamHI/BamHI/BamHI/XbaI*.
- VRC 6301** VRC6301 (pVR1012x/s-GP(IC)).
15 No other description, but this is the same as 6300 with the addition of an Sfi site to the 1012 backbone.
- VRC 6302** VRC6302 (pVR1012-GP(IC) delta TM).
The TM region of GP(IC) was truncated in this mutant. A stop codon (TGA) was added downstream of the *BspMI* site. This protein is secreted
20 and doesn't form a trimer.
- VRC 6303** VRC 6303 (pVR1012x/s Ebola GP (IC) (dTM)).
A pVRC2000 based vector expressing Ebola glycoprotein (Ivory Coast subtype) without transmembrane and intracellular domains. Using PCR, a stop codon was generated downstream of a.a. 650, followed by a *BglII* site.
25 The vector expresses a 650 a.a. secreted glycoprotein (a.a. 1 - a.a. 650).
- VRC 6310** VRC 6310 (pAdApt Ebola GP (IC) (dTM)).
An adenoviral shuttle vector expressing Ebola glycoprotein (subtype Ivory Coast) without its transmembrane and intracellular domains. Using PCR, a stop codon was generated downstream of a.a. 651 of GP(IC). The resulting
30 recombinant adenovirus expresses a 651 a.a secreted glycoprotein termed as GP(IC)(dTM).

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- VRC 6351** VRC6351 (pVR1012x/s-sGP(IC)). No other description.
- VRC 6400** VRC6400 (pVR1012-NP).
Backbone, pVR1012(#450) expressing Ebola Nucleoprotein of the Ivory Coast Subtype.
- 5 **VRC 6401** VRC6401 (pVR1012x/s-NP).
No other description, but this is the same as 6400 with the addition of an Sfi site to the 1012 backbone.
- VRC 6500** VRC6500 (pVR1012-VP35).
The backbone is pVR1012(#450). The insert is VP35 from Ebola cloned
10 from pGEM 3Zf(+)-VP35(#1213).
- VRC 6600** VRC6600 (pAD/CMV-GP(dTM)(Z-CITE-S)). No other description.
- VRC 6601** VRC6601 (pAdApt Ebola GP(S)). No other description.
- VRC 6602** VRC 6602 (pAdApt Ebola GP(S)(dTM)).
An adenoviral shuttle vector expressing Ebola glycoprotein (Sudan subtype)
15 without its transmembrane and intracellular domains. A stop codon was fused downstream of a.a. 650 of GP(S). The resulting recombinant adenovirus expresses a 654 a.a. secreted glycoprotein, termed as GP(S)(dTM).
- VRC 6603** VRC6603 (pAdApt Ebola GP(Z)). No other description.
- 20 **VRC 6604** VRC 6604 (pAdApt Ebola GP(Z)(dTM)).
Adenoviral shuttle vector expressing Ebola glycoprotein (subtype Zaire) without its transmembrane and intracellular domains. A stop codon was fused downstream of a.a. 651 of GP(Z). The resulting recombinant adenovirus expresses a 655 a.a. secreted glycoprotein termed as
25 GP(Z)(dTM).
- VRC 6701** VRC6701 (pVR1012-Marburg).
Marburg glycoprotein (GP) open reading frame, Musoke strain. Marburg was cloned into backbone #450(*Bam*(blunt)/*Xba*I) from VRC6700 (*Xba*/PvuII).
- 30 **VRC 6702** VRC 6702 (pVR1012x/s Marburg GP (dTM)).

5 **VRC 6710** VRC 6710 (pAdApt Marburg GP (dTM)).

10

VRC 6801 VRC6801 (pVR1012x/s Lassa GP (dTM)). No other description.

VRC 6811 VRC6811 (pAdApt Lassa GP (dTM)). No other description.

EXAMPLE 1

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To make ADV-GP, the *Bam*HI/*Eco*RI fragment of GP(Z) was digested from pGEM-3Zf(-)-GP, treated with Klenow, and inserted into *Hind*III/*Xba*I/Kle/CIP treated pRc/CMV plasmid. The resulting plasmid (PRC/CMV-GP(Z)) was digested by *Nru*I/*Dra*III and treated with Klenow. The *Nru*I/*Dra*III/Kle fragment containing the CMV enhancer, GP(Z) DNA and bovine growth hormone polyadenylation signal was inserted into the *Bgl*II site of the adenoviral shuttle plasmid pAdBgIII (Ohno, T. *et al.* 1994 *Science* 265:781-784). The adenovirus, a first generation dl 309-based Ad5 vector, contained a deletion in E1 to render the vector replication-defective and a partial deletion/substitution in E3, which disrupts the coding sequences for the E3 proteins with a relative molecular mass of 14.7 kD, 14.5 kD and 10.4 kD, respectively. The recombinant adenovirus expressing Zaire GP, ADV-GP(Z), was made according to previously published methods (Aoki, K. *et al.* 1999 *Mol Med* 5:224-231). The dose of adenovirus administered, 10^{10} plaque-forming units (PFU) per animal (approximately 3×10^9 PFU/kg), is within the range used safely in human gene therapy trials.

Animal study and safety. Eight cynomolgus macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*), 3 years of age and weighing 2-3 kg, obtained from Covance (Princeton, NJ), were used for the immunization and challenge experiment. To obtain blood specimens and administer vaccines, the monkeys were anesthetized with Ketamine. The animals were housed singly and received regular enrichment according to the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (DHEW No. NIH 86-23). Just before the Ebola virus challenge and up to the end of the experiment, the animals were maintained in the Maximum Containment Laboratory (BSL-4) and fed and checked daily. One animal was euthanized that appeared moribund and was subsequently necropsied for pathologic examination. In addition, a single asymptomatic vaccinated animal was euthanized for pathologic and virologic analysis.

Mouse immunization. DNA and adenovirus vectors expressing Ebola Zaire GP or NP were constructed as described previously (Xu, L. *et al.* 1998 *Nat Med* 4:37-42; Ohno, T. *et al.* 1994 *Science* 265:781-784), with gene expression under the control of the cytomegalovirus enhancer and promoter. Mice were immunized intramuscularly with 100 μ g of DNA (pGP or a p1012 plasmid control) or 10^8 PFU of adenovirus (ADV-GP or ADV- Δ E1 control virus) on days 0, 14, and 28 and blood was collected on day 28. On day 42, mice received an intramuscular boost with DNA or adenovirus and titers were re-

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measured on day 56. ELISA IgG titers were determined using 96-well plates coated with a preparation of Ebola virus antigen derived from purified virions and enriched for membrane-associated proteins (GP, VP40 and VP24) (Ksiazek, T.G. *et al.* 1992 *J Clin Microbiol* 30:947-950). Specific antigen binding was detected using a goat anti-human
5 IgG(H+L)-horseradish peroxidase conjugate and ABTS/Peroxide (substrate/indicator).

Macaque immunization. For the DNA immunizations, animals received 1 mg each of DNA expressing GP(Zaire) [GP(Z)], GP(Ivory Coast) [pGP(IC)], GP(Sudan) [pGP(S)] and NP(Zaire) administered as a mixture [pGP/NP], or 4 mg empty [pGP(Z)] control plasmid bilaterally (2 mg per side) in the deltoid muscle. Immunization at weeks 0
10 and 4 were by IM injection, and at week 8 by Biojector. For the adenovirus boost, animals received 10^{10} PFU of ADV-GP (Zaire subtype) or ADV-ΔE1 (empty vector) divided into two doses administered bilaterally in the deltoid muscle. At week 32, all animals received an intraperitoneal injection of approximately 6 PFUs of Ebola virus (Zaire 1976 isolate; Mayinga strain) (Kiley, M.P. *et al.* 1980 *J Gen Virol* 49:333-341) in 1 ml Hanks' buffered
15 salt solution. The virus was isolated directly from patient blood and used after a single passage in Vero cells.

ELISA IgG titers were determined as above for control (Plasmid: ADV-ΔE1) and immunized [pGP/NP: ADV-GP(Z)] monkeys. The reciprocal endpoint of dilution for each subject was at week 12 and week 24. Serum antibody levels were measured by ELISA as
20 described (Ksiazek, T.G. *et al.* 1992 *J Clin Microbiol* 30:947-950).

Blood was collected from control (plasmid: ADV-ΔE1) or immunized [pGP/NP: ADV-GP(Z)] animals 1-3 days prior to the immunizations at weeks 4, 8 and 20, and at week 24. Blood was separated over a Percoll gradient to obtain the lymphocyte enriched population. Lymphocytes were stimulated as described (Xu, L. *et al.* 1998 *Nat Med* 4:37-
25 42) for 5 days *in vitro* using supernatant from cells transfected with either Ebola secreted glycoprotein (SGP) or empty plasmid, and proliferation was measured by ^3H -thymidine uptake. The proliferation index was calculated as the proliferation in wells receiving SGP divided by proliferation in wells receiving control supernatant.

Viral detection in macaques. The presence of circulating Ebola virus antigen was
30 detected as described (Ksiazek, T.G. *et al.* 1992 *J Clin Microbiol* 30:947-950) by capturing

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VP40 protein from serial dilutions of monkey plasma. 96-well plates coated with antiVP40 mAb were used to capture antigen, and detection was with a rabbit anti-Ebola virus serum.

EXAMPLE 2

The amino acid sequences of Ebola GP(Zaire) and NP (Zaire) were obtained from Genbank: GP(Zaire), Genbank accession no. P87666; NP(Zaire), Genbank accession no. NC_002549; while GP(Sudan/Gulu) was obtained from the CDC. The amino acid sequences were then back-translated to DNA sequences using mammalian preferred codons. Serial 75 bp oligos with 25 bp overlapping were prepared to cover the entire gene. The oligos were then assembled into intact mammalian genes containing preferred codons using PCR. In the design, a stop codon was introduced in front of the predicted transmembrane domains of GP(Zaire) (a.a. 648-676) and GP (Sudan/Gulu) (a.a. 648-676) so that this region was excluded from these synthetically created genes. The deletions also led to the loss of a 4 a.a. cytoplasmic region in both constructs. Final sequencing of the Ebola GP (Zaire) sequence revealed 10 divergent amino acids from the laboratory GP sequence, which was used in our animal studies and these were corrected by site-directed mutagenesis. These inserts were cloned into p1012 x/s by *XbaI/SalI*.

Construction of CMV/R-GP(S/G)(Δ TM)/h

The codon-modified, transmembrane domain deleted form of the Ebola GP (Sudan/Gulu) gene was excised from p1012 (x/s)-GP(S/G)(Δ TM)/h using *SalI/KpnI*, and inserted into the *SalI/KpnI* digested CMV/R/MCS plasmid.

Construction of CMV/R GP(Z) (Δ TM)/h

The codon-modified, transmembrane domain deleted form of the Ebola GP (Zaire) gene was excised from p1012 x/s-GP (Z)(Δ TM)/h *SalI/BglII* sites and cloned into the *SalI/BglII* sites of the CMV/R plasmid.

Construction of CMV/R Ebola NP

The *NotI-KpnI* fragment from VRC6400 (pVR1012-NP) expressing Ebola nucleoprotein of Zaire Subtype was excised and cloned into the *NotI/KpnI* sites of the CMV/R plasmid.

EXAMPLE 3

IMPROVED NON-VIRAL MAMMALIAN EXPRESSION VECTOR

This invention provides an improved mammalian expression vector which generates a higher level of protein expression than vectors currently in use.

5 Initially, 3 new vectors, each containing a different enhancer, were developed and tested. The RSV enhancer, the mouse ubiquitin enhancer (mUBB), and the CMV enhancer (Xu *et al.* 1998 *Nature Med.* 4:37-42) were each combined with the HTLV-1 R region (Takebe *et al.* 1988 *Mol Cell Biol* 8:466-472) to create separate vectors. When these 3 vectors were compared to the backbone containing the CMV enhancer in combination with
10 the CMV translational enhancer and intron (CMVint), which is currently the most effective vector, *in vitro* data showed that expression with the vector containing the CMV/R was increased 5-10 fold compared to CMV/int, and immunological studies showed induction of significantly higher CD4 and CD8 T cell responses compared to CMVint. Both *in vivo* and *in vitro* responses were markedly higher with this new vector. Neither of the other two
15 vectors produced comparable results.

The expression vector is unique in that it uses a specific translational enhancer in combination with specific enhancer/promoters to yield high levels of expression and enhanced immunogenicity for DNA vaccines. This is particularly important because the potency of these vaccines in humans is marginal and generic improvements can serve as
20 important platforms to make the technology practical for human use. The expression vector cassettes can be used in other gene based vaccines as well, or for production of recombinant proteins from eukaryotic expression vectors. The invention is useful in the production of genetic vaccines and gene therapies for a wide variety of diseases, including HIV and other viral diseases and cancer.

25 Figure 50. Enhanced expression of modified CMV expression vector, CMV/R.

Mouse fibroblast 3T3 cells were transfected with (A) vector alone (lane 1), CMVint-gp145(dCFI) (lane 2), CMV/R-gp145(dCFI) (lane 3) or (B) mUBB-gp145(dCFI) (lane 4), mUBB/R-gp145(dCFI) (lane 5) in 6-well tissue culture dishes with 0.5 ug of the corresponding plasmids using calcium phosphate. 24 hours after transfection,
30 cells were harvested and lysed in lysis buffer (50 mM HEPES, 150 mM NaCl, 1% NP-40, Mini Complete protease inhibitor cocktail (Roche)). 10 µg of total protein of each sample

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were separated on a 4-15% gradient gel using SDS-PAGE, followed by protein transfer and Western blot analysis. Human HIV-IgG (1:5000) was used as the primary antibody, and HRP-conjugated goat anti-human IgG (1:5000) as the secondary antibody. The membrane was developed using the ECL Western blot developing system. The arrow indicates the specific band for the HIV Env gp145(Δ CFI) polyprotein.

Figure 51. Enhanced immunogenicity of modified CMV expression vector, CMV/R, in mice.

Five mice in each group were immunized with 50 μ g of the indicated plasmid DNA at weeks 0, 2, and 6. 10 days after the last injection, splenocytes from each mouse were harvested and stimulated using a pool of control peptides (15 mer), or a pool of HIV Env peptides (15 mer) for 6 hours. The stimulated splenocytes were stained using a cocktail of antibodies containing PE-anti-mouse CD3, PerCP-anti-mouse CD4, APC-anti-mouse CD8, FITC-anti-mouse IFN- γ and FITC-anti-mouse TNF- α . The samples were analyzed by flow cytometry. CD3/CD4/IFN- γ /TNF- α and CD3/CD8/IFN- γ /TNF- α positive cell numbers were measured using FloJo software (Treestar).

The CMV Enhancer/Promoter, R Region (HTVL-1), CMV IE Splicing Acceptor sequence

(SEQ ID NO: 52):

CCATTGCATACGTTGTATCCATATCATAATATGTACATTTATATTGGCTCATGTCCAACAT
TACCGCCATGTTGACATTGATTATTGACTAGTTATTAATAGTAATCAATTACGGGGTCATT
20 AGTTCATAGCCCATATATGGAGTTCCGCGTTACATAACTTACGGTAAATGGCCCGCCTGGC
TGACCGCCCAACGACCCCCGCCCATTGACGTCAATAATGACGTATGTTCCCATAGTAACGC
CAATAGGGACTTTCCATTGACGTCAATGGGTGGAGTATTTACGGTAAACTGCCCACTTGGC
AGTACATCAAGTGTATCATATGCCAAGTACGCCCCCTATTGACGTCAATGACGGTAAATGG
CCCGCCTGGCATTATGCCCAGTACATGACCTTATGGGACTTTCCTACTTGGCAGTACATCT
25 ACGTATTAGTCATCGCTATTACCATGGTGATGCGGTTTTGGCAGTACATCAATGGGCGTGG
ATAGCGGTTTGACTCACGGGGATTTCCAAGTCTCCACCCCATTGACGTCAATGGGAGTTTG
TTTTGGCACCAAAATCAACGGGACTTTCCAAAATGTCGTAACAACTCCGCCCCATTGACGC
AAATGGGCGGTAGGCGTGTACGGTGGGAGGTCTATATAAGCAGAGCTCGTTTAGTGAACCG
TCAGATCGCCTGGAGACGCCATCCACGCTGTTTTGACCTCCATAGAAGACACCGGGACCGA
30 TCCAGCCTCCATCGGCTCGCATCTCTCCTTCACGCGCCCGCCGCTTACCTGAGGCCGCCA
TCCACGCCGGTTGAGTCGCGTTCTGCCGCTCCCGCCTGTGGTGCCCTCCTGAACTACGTCC
GCCGTCTAGGTAAGTTTAGAGCTCAGGTTCGAGACCGGGCCTTTGTCCGGCGCTCCCTTGGA
GCCTACCTAGACTCAGCCGGCTCTCCACGCTTTGCCTGACCCTGCTTGCTCAACTCTAGTT
AACGGTGGAGGGCAGTGTAGTCTGAGCAGTACTCGTTGCTGCCGCGCGGCCACCAGACAT
35 AATAGCTGACAGACTAACAGACTGTTCCCTTTCCATGGGTCTTTTCTGCAG

1-741: CMV Enhancer/Promoter

742-972: HTLV-1 R region

973-1095: CMV/ IE Splicing Acceptor

- 5 While the present invention has been described in some detail for purposes of clarity and understanding, one skilled in the art will appreciate that various changes in form and detail can be made without departing from the true scope of the invention.

DEMANDES OU BREVETS VOLUMINEUX

LA PRÉSENTE PARTIE DE CETTE DEMANDE OU CE BREVETS
COMPREND PLUS D'UN TOME.

CECI EST LE TOME 1 DE 2

NOTE: Pour les tomes additionels, veuillez contacter le Bureau Canadien des Brevets.

JUMBO APPLICATIONS / PATENTS

THIS SECTION OF THE APPLICATION / PATENT CONTAINS MORE
THAN ONE VOLUME.

THIS IS VOLUME _____ OF _____

NOTE: For additional volumes please contact the Canadian Patent Office.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An expression vector comprising an enhancer with at least 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, or 100 % sequence identity to the full length SEQ ID NO: 52, wherein the enhancer mediates expression of a nucleic acid operably linked thereto.
2. The expression vector of claim 1 wherein the % identity is 95.
3. The expression vector of claim 1 wherein the % identity is 96.
4. The expression vector of claim 1 wherein the % identity is 97.
5. The expression vector of claim 1 wherein the % identity is 98.
6. The expression vector of claim 1 wherein the % identity is 99.
7. The expression vector of claim 1 wherein the % identity is 100.

Application number / numéro de demande: 2519282

Figures: 50a-b

Pages: 50

DRW-IP

Unscannable items
received with this application
(Request original documents in File Prep. Section on the 10th floor)

Documents reçu avec cette demande ne pouvant être balayés
(Commander les documents originaux dans la section de préparation des dossiers au
10^{ème} étage)

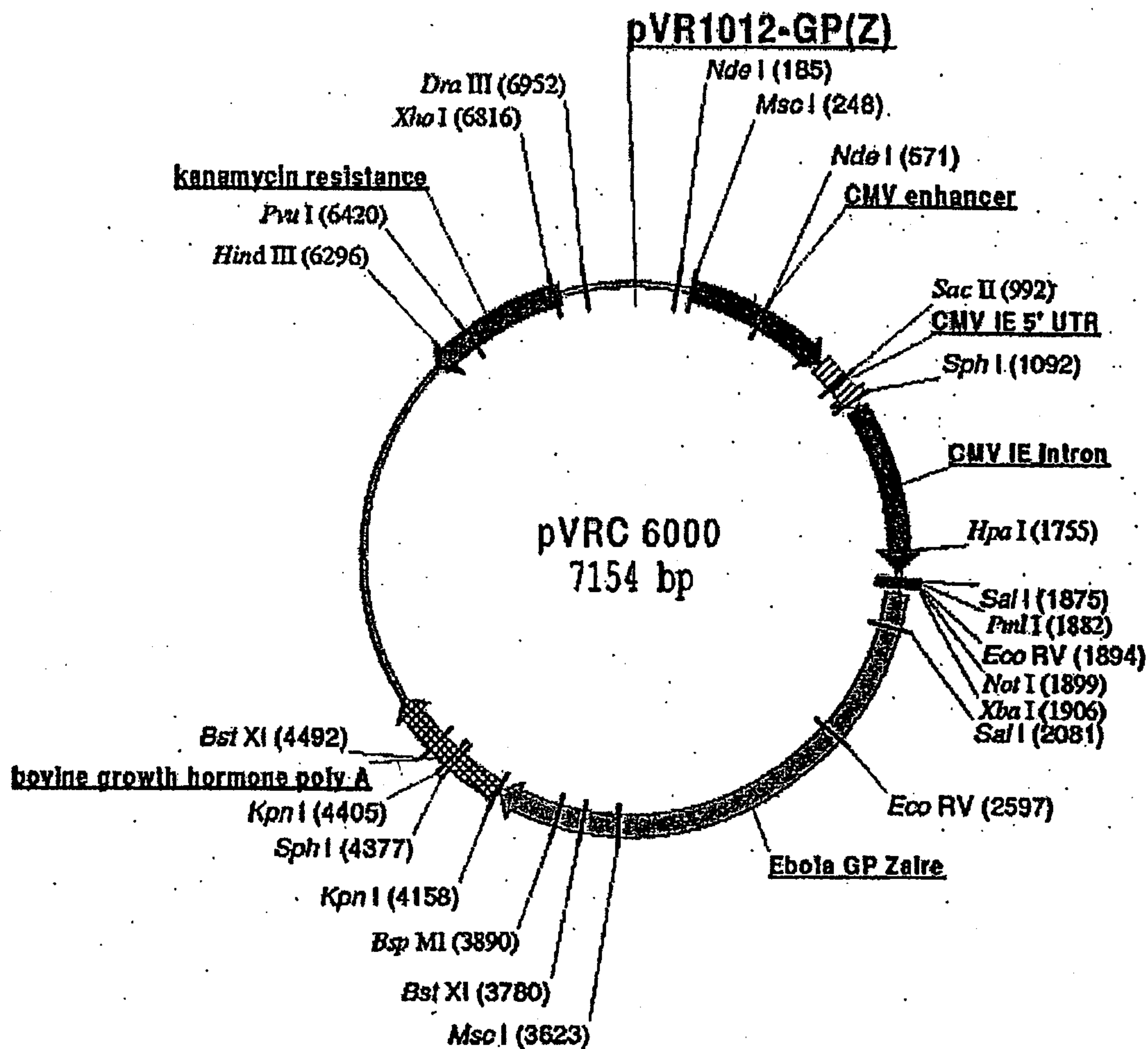


Figure 1

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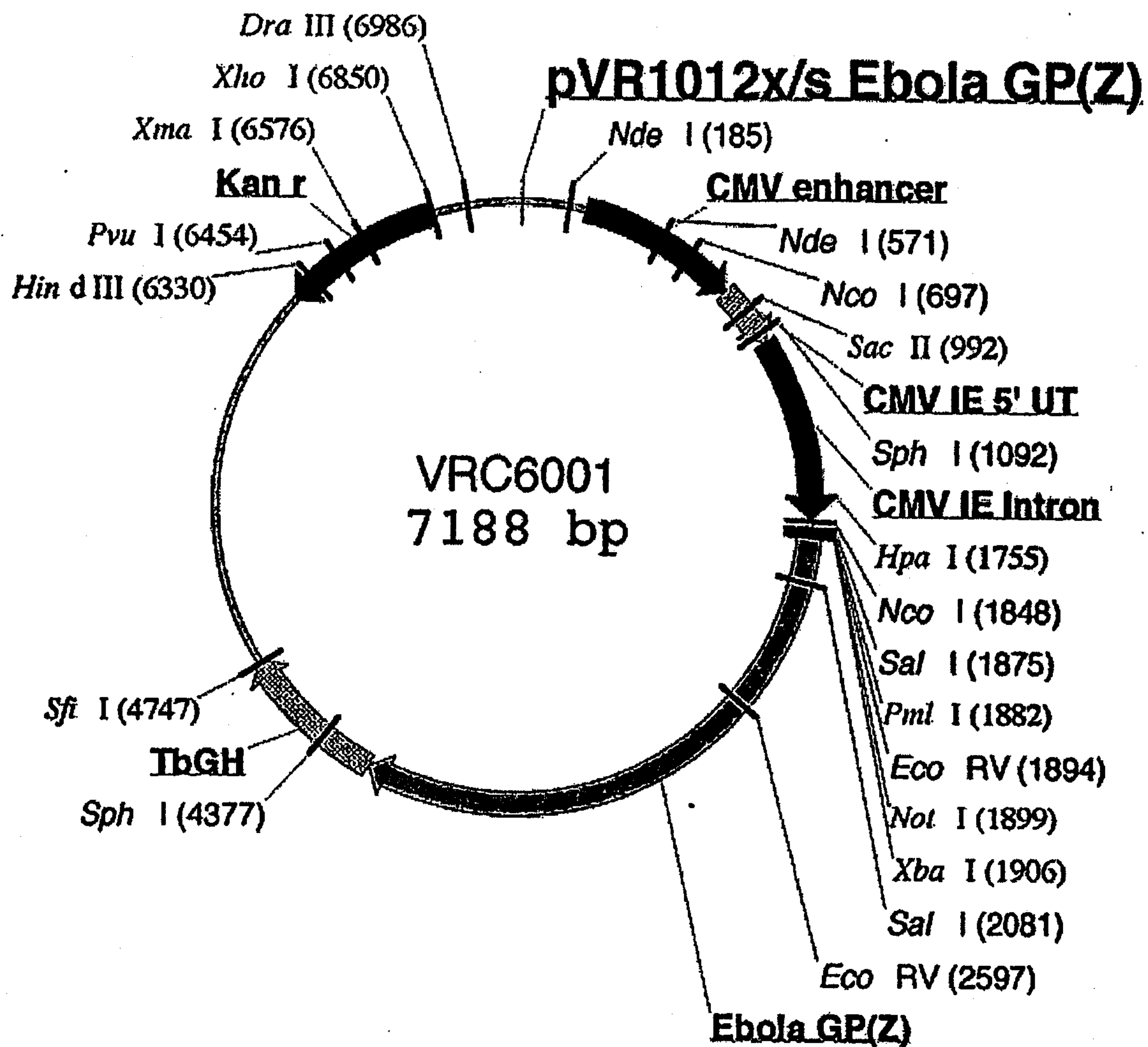


Figure 2

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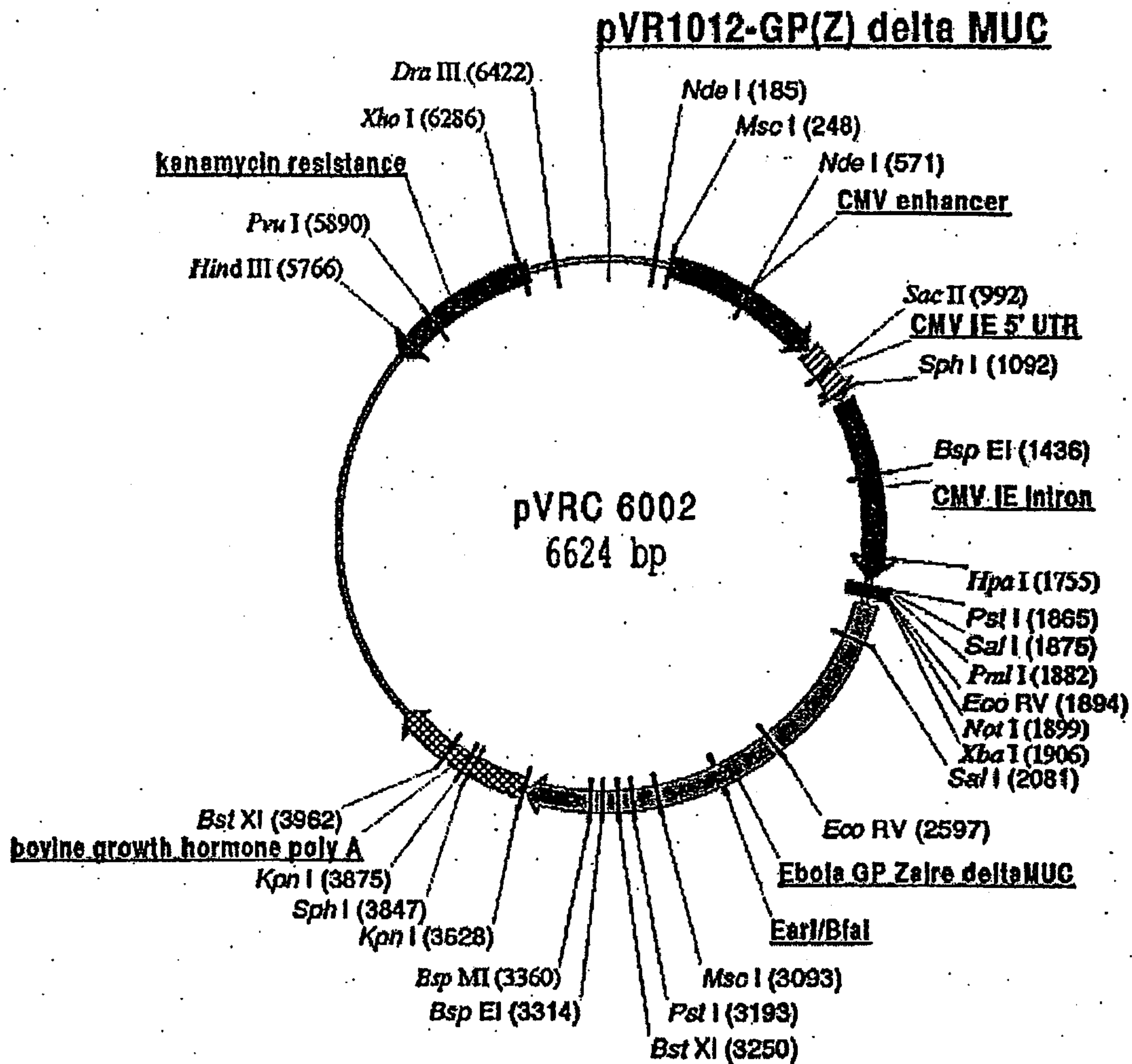


Figure 3

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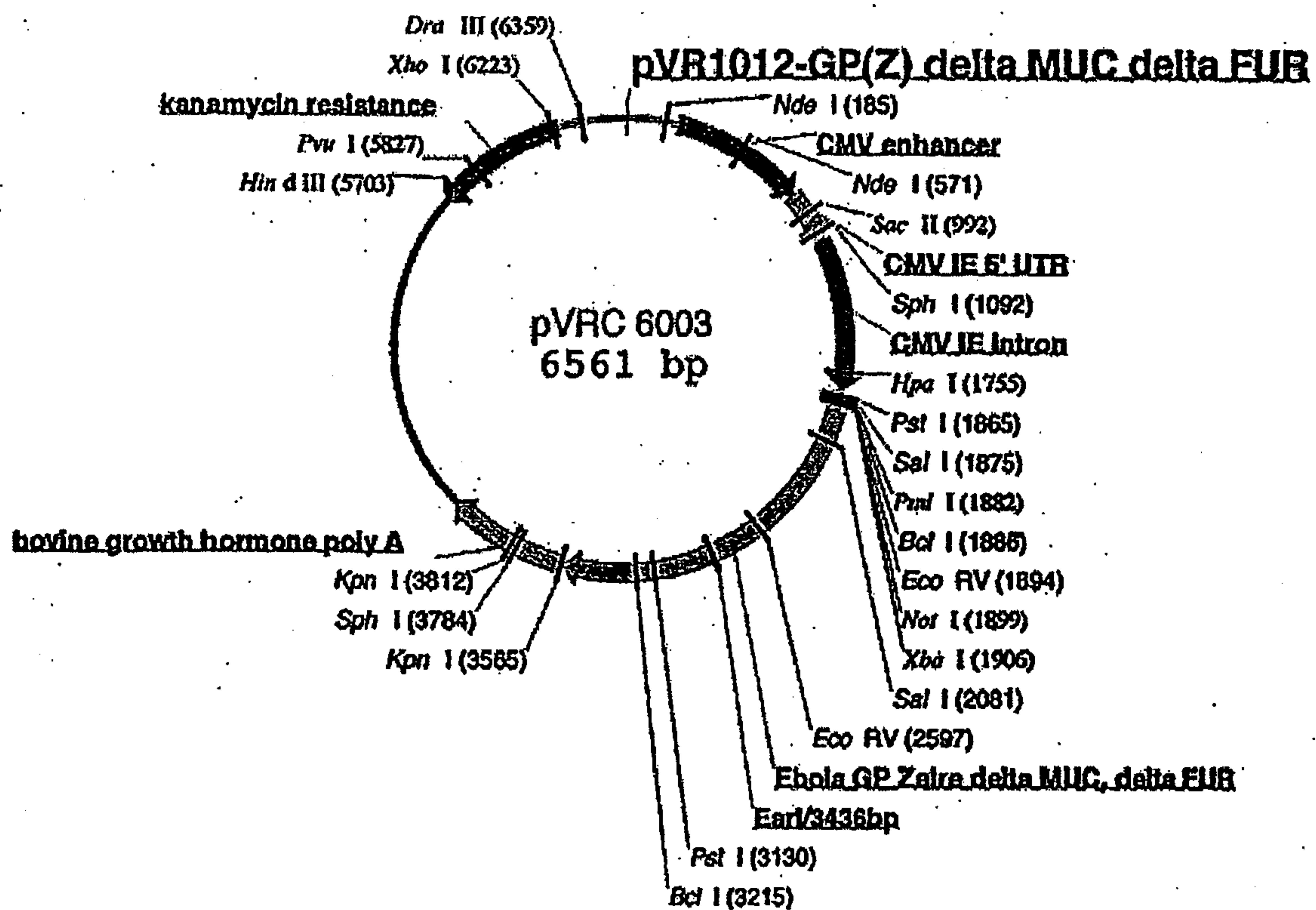


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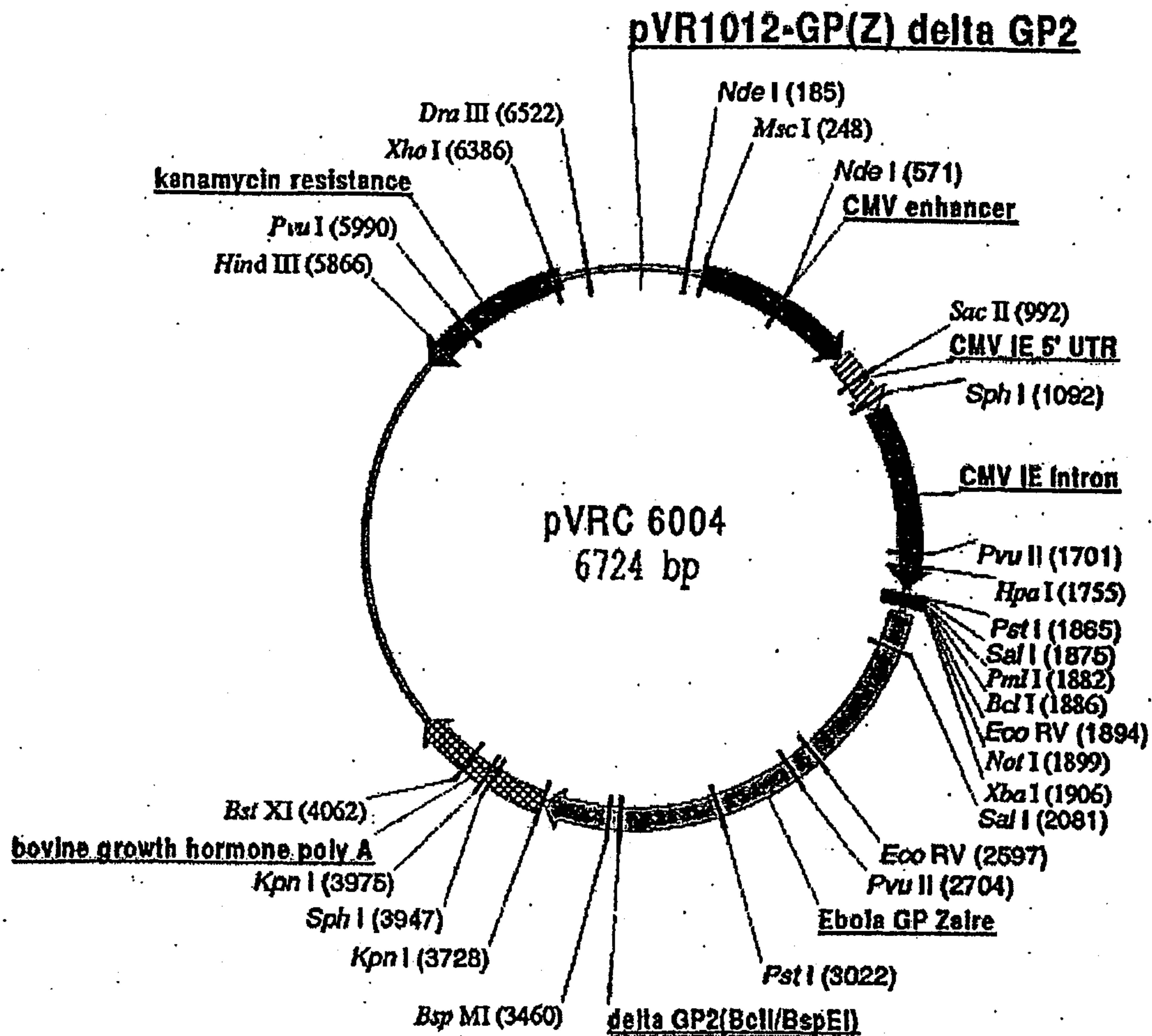


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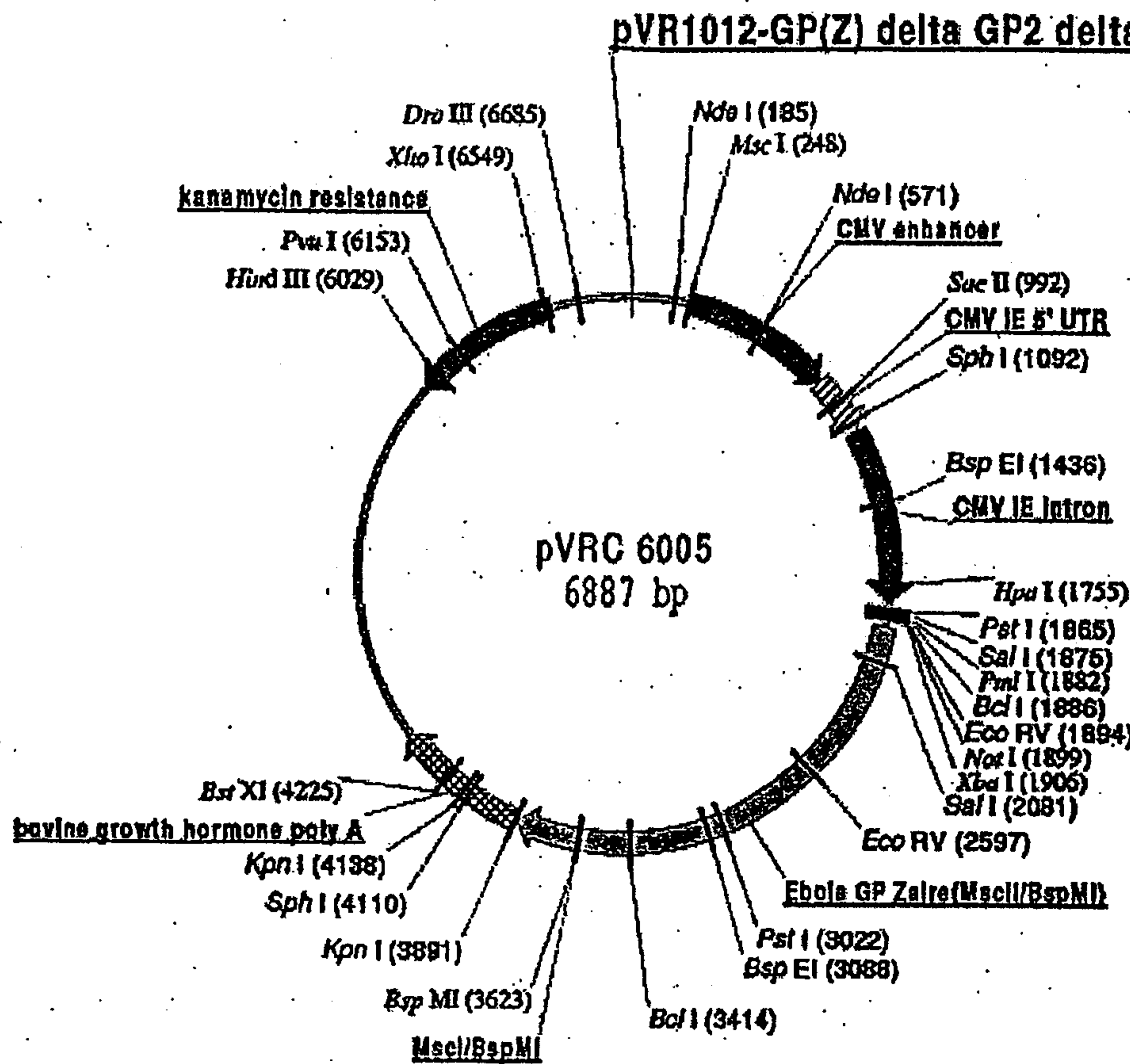


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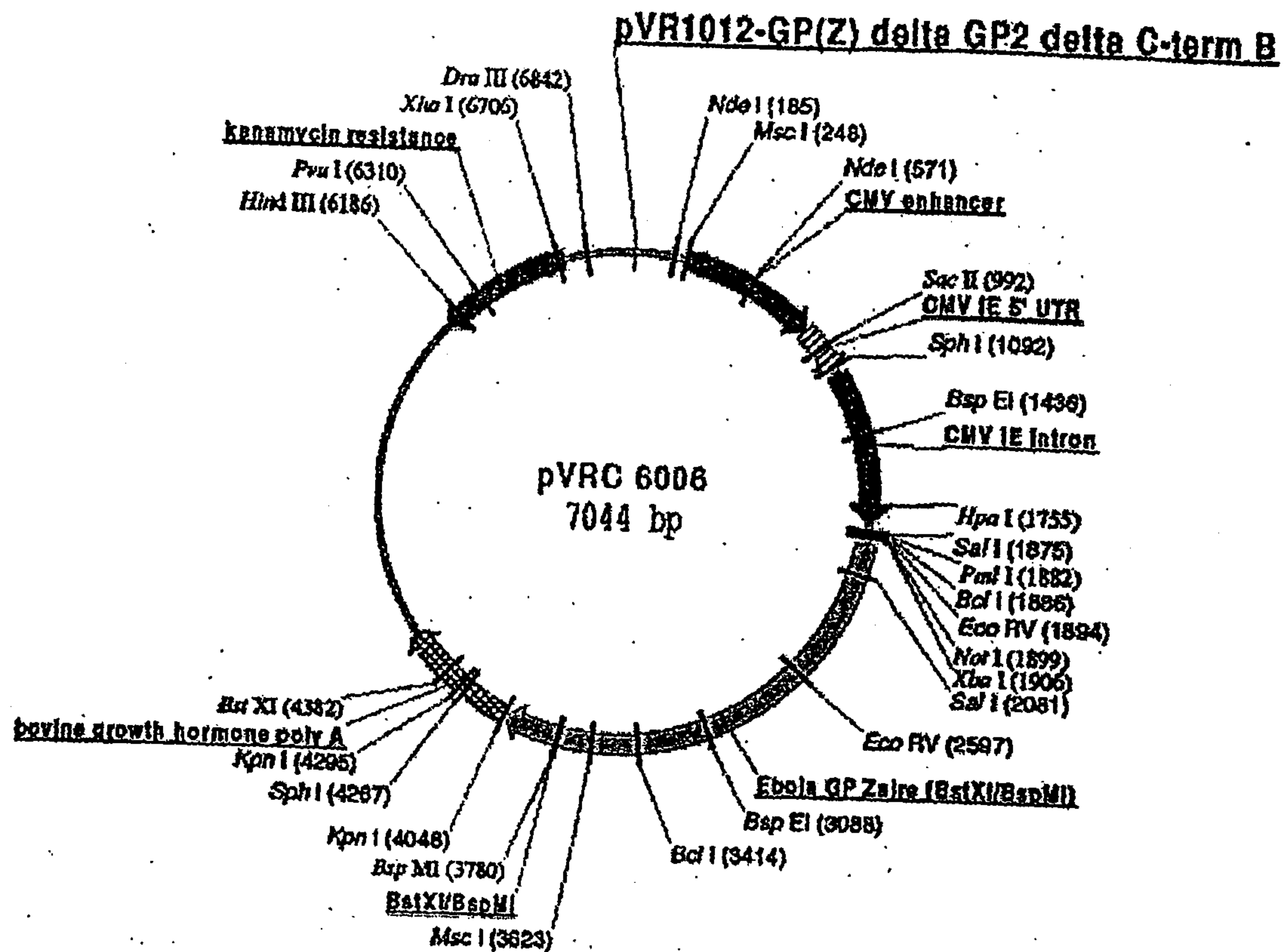


Figure 7

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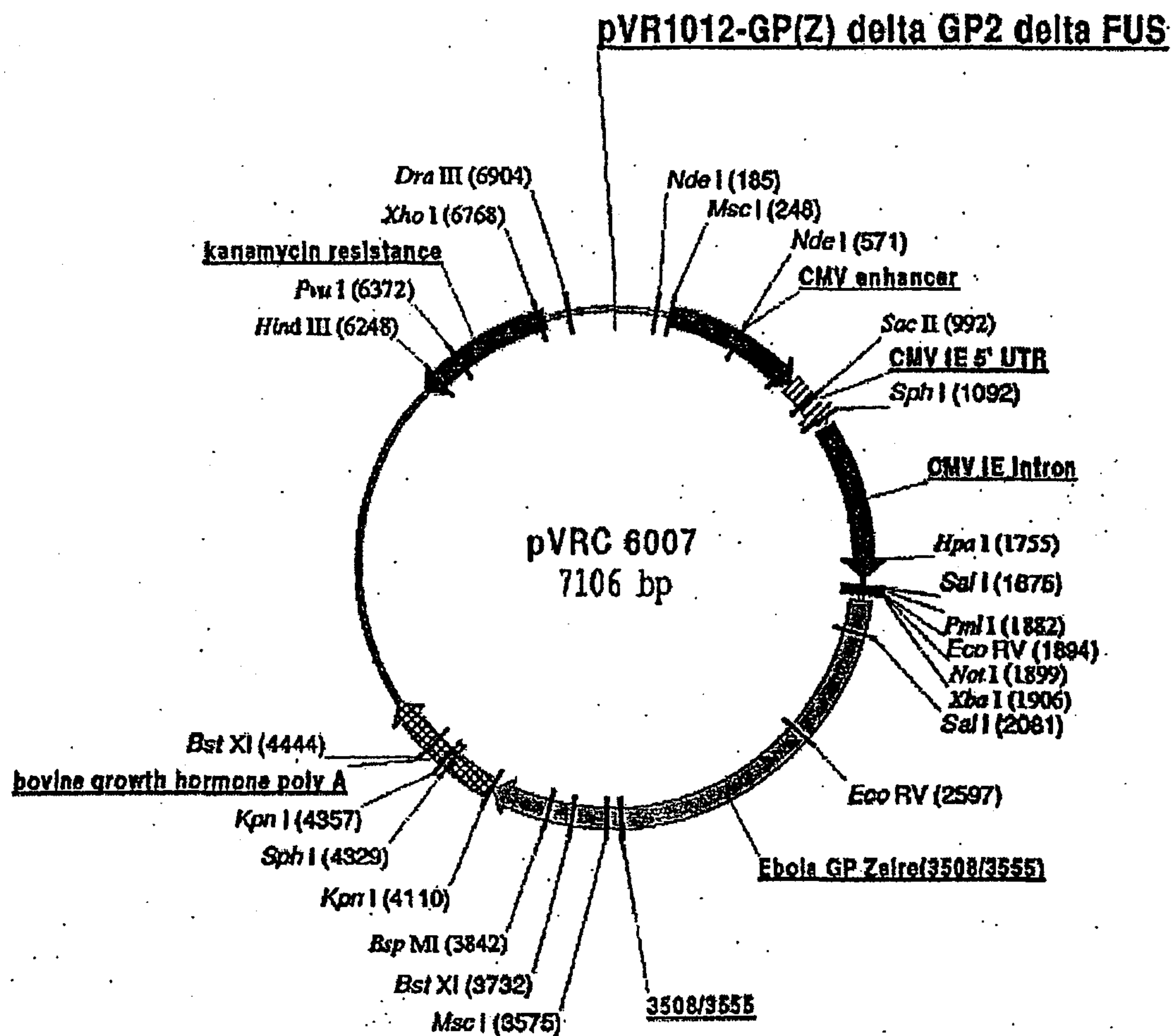


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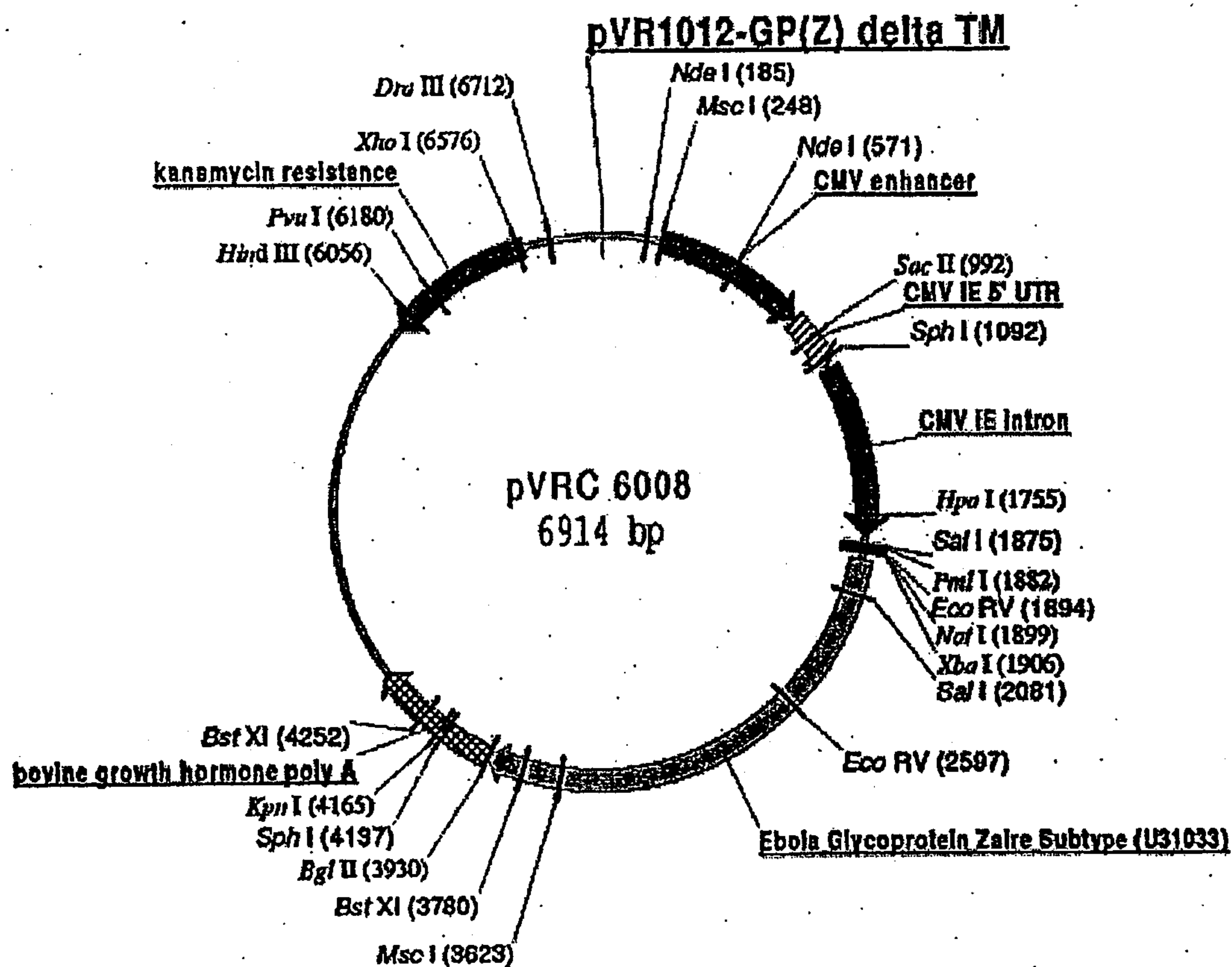


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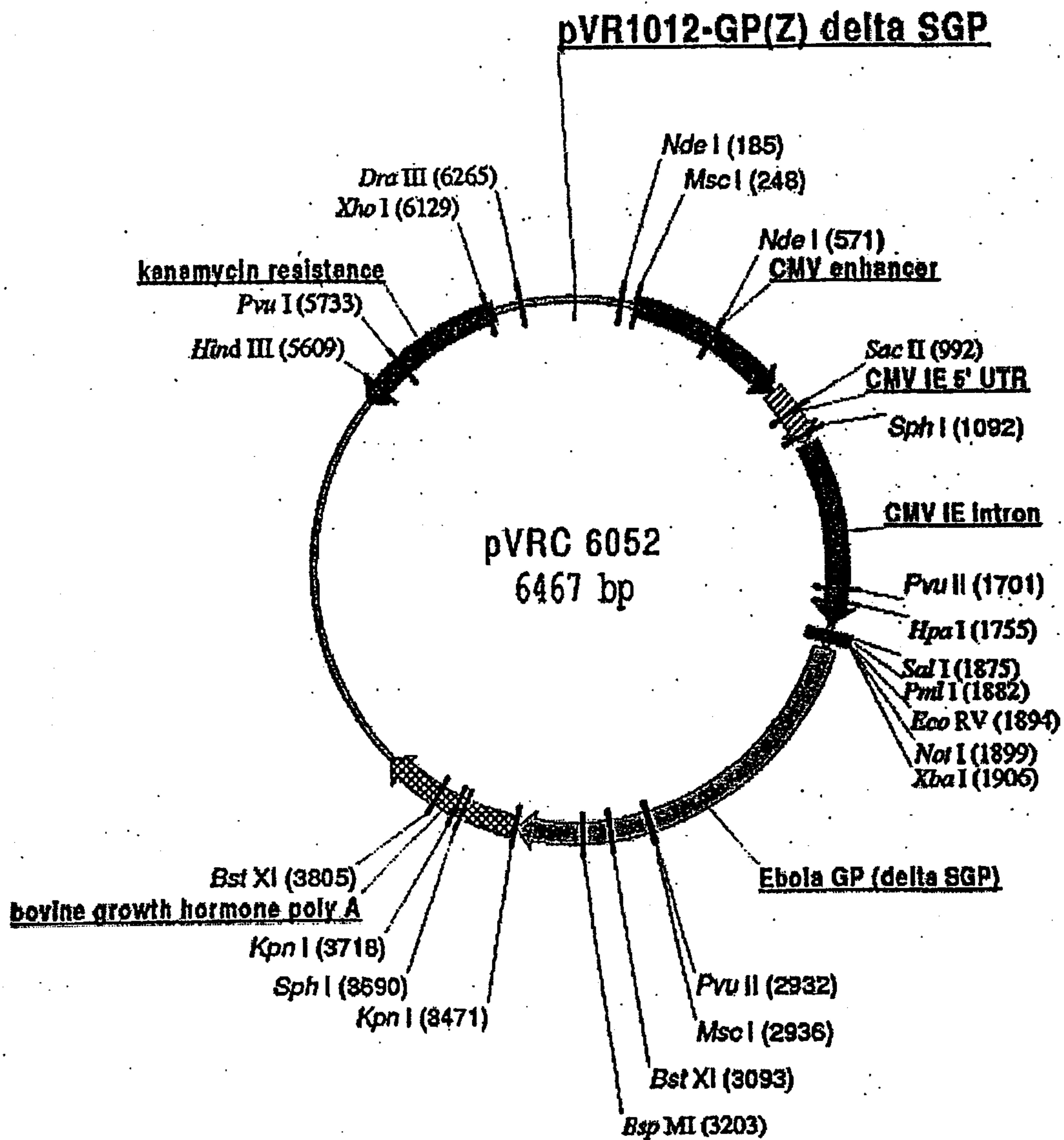


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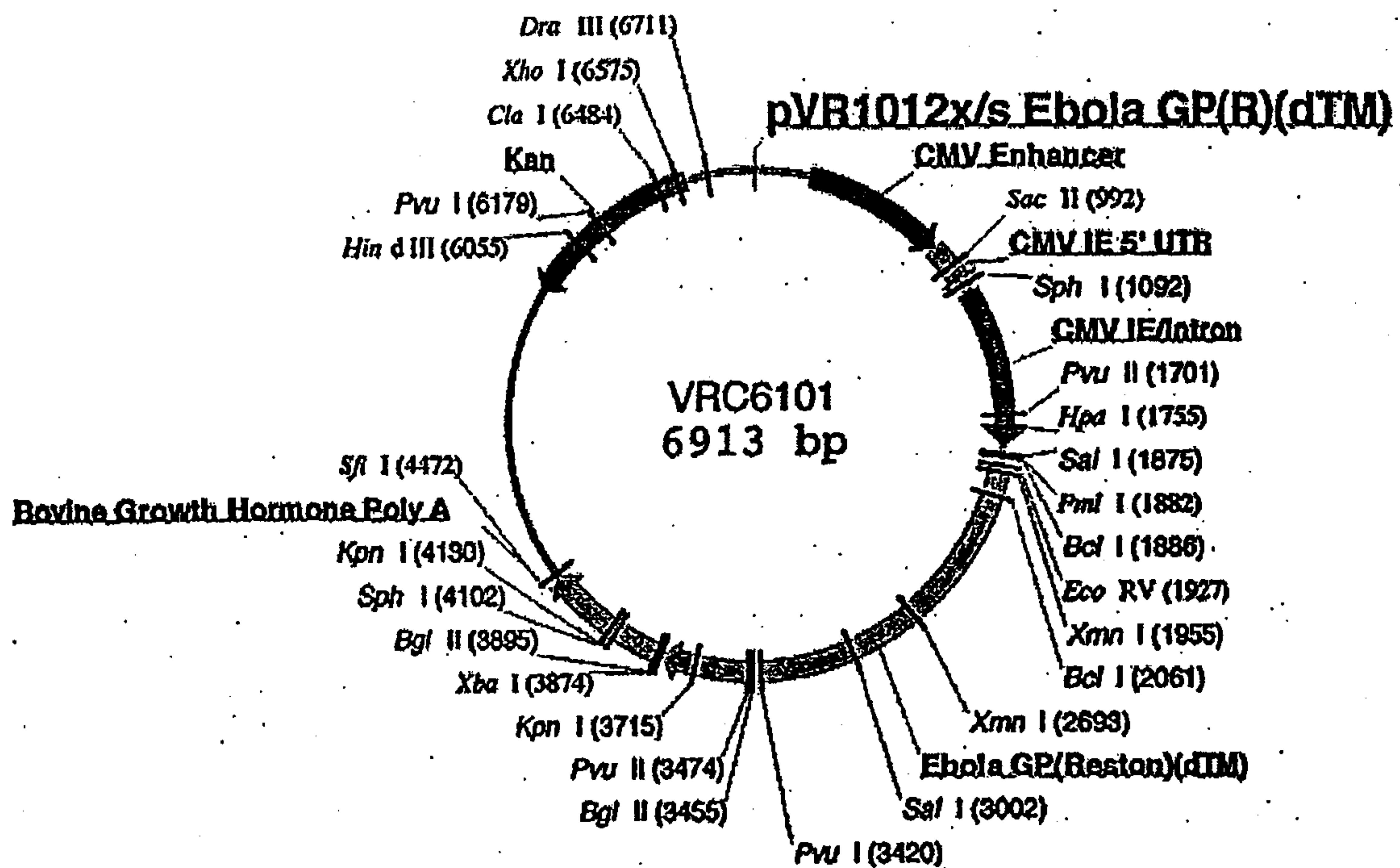


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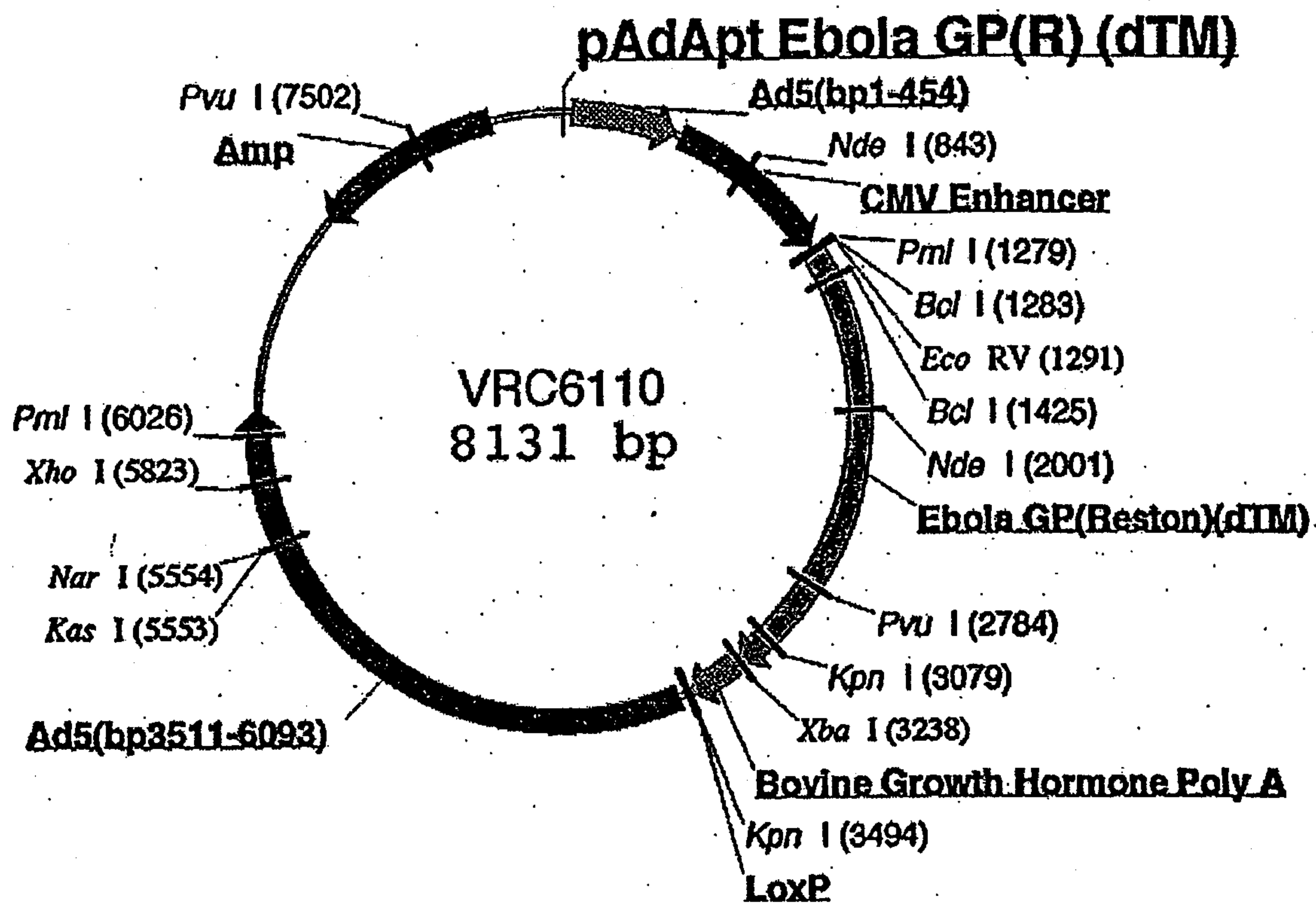


Figure 12

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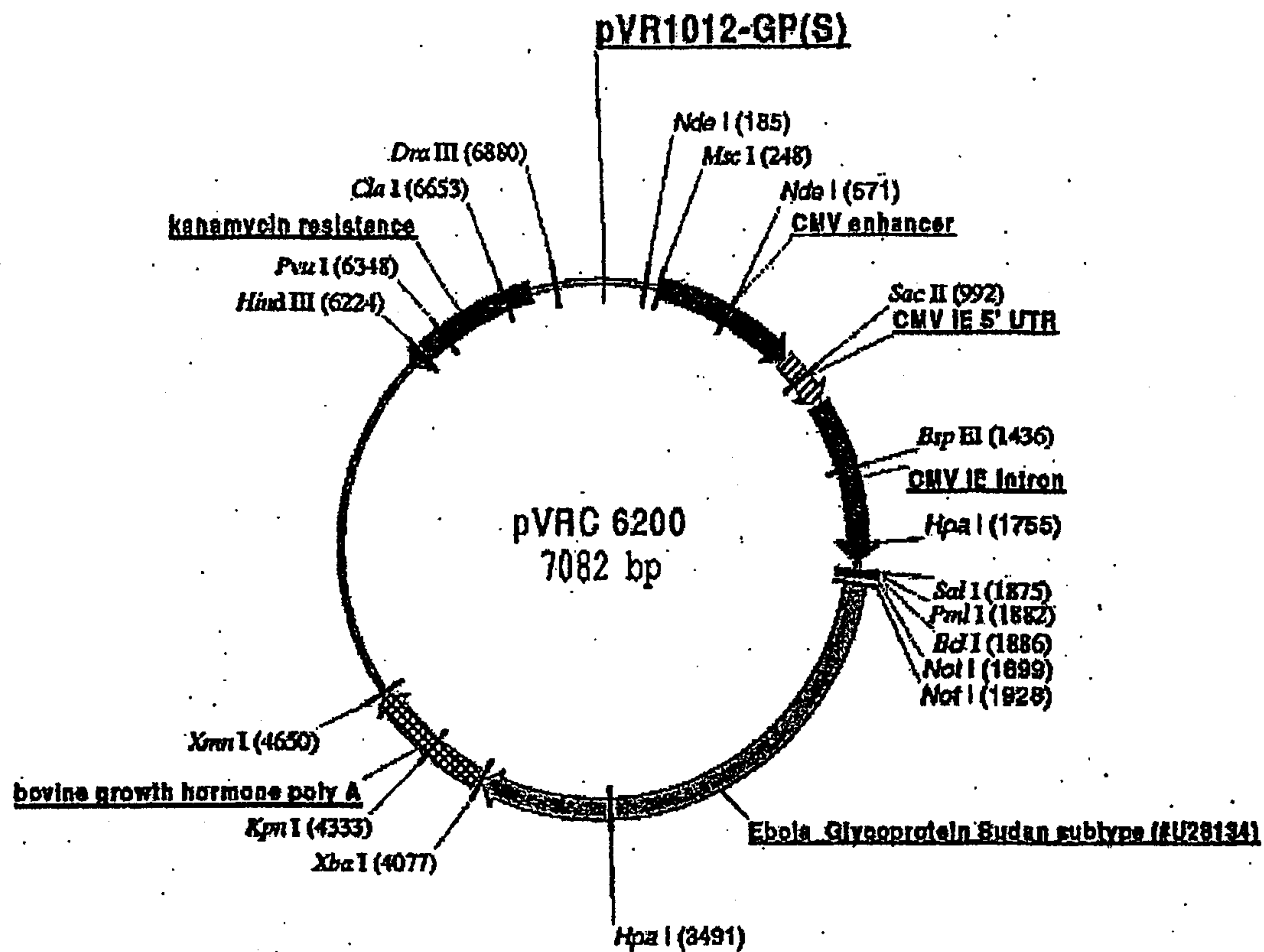


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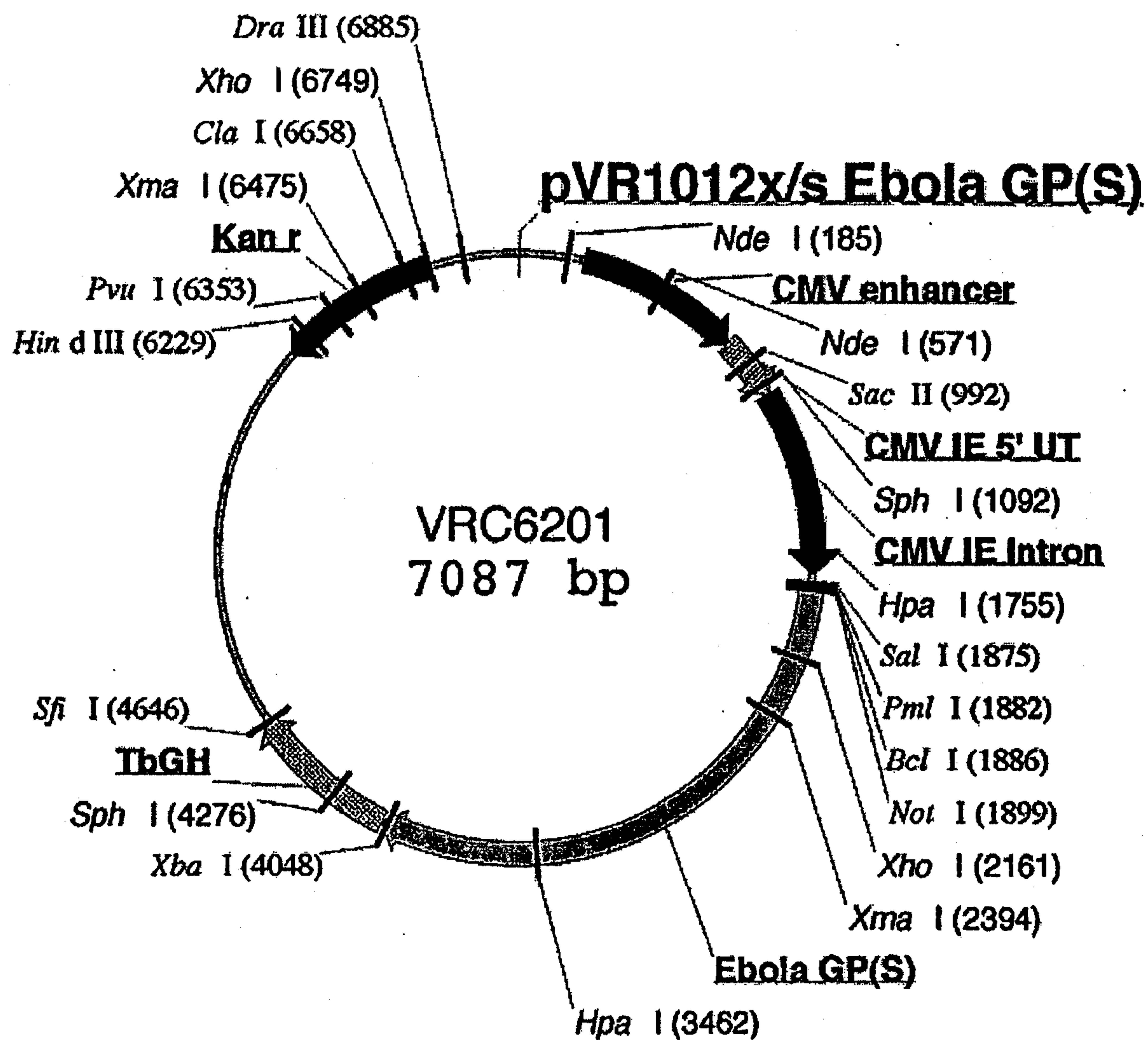


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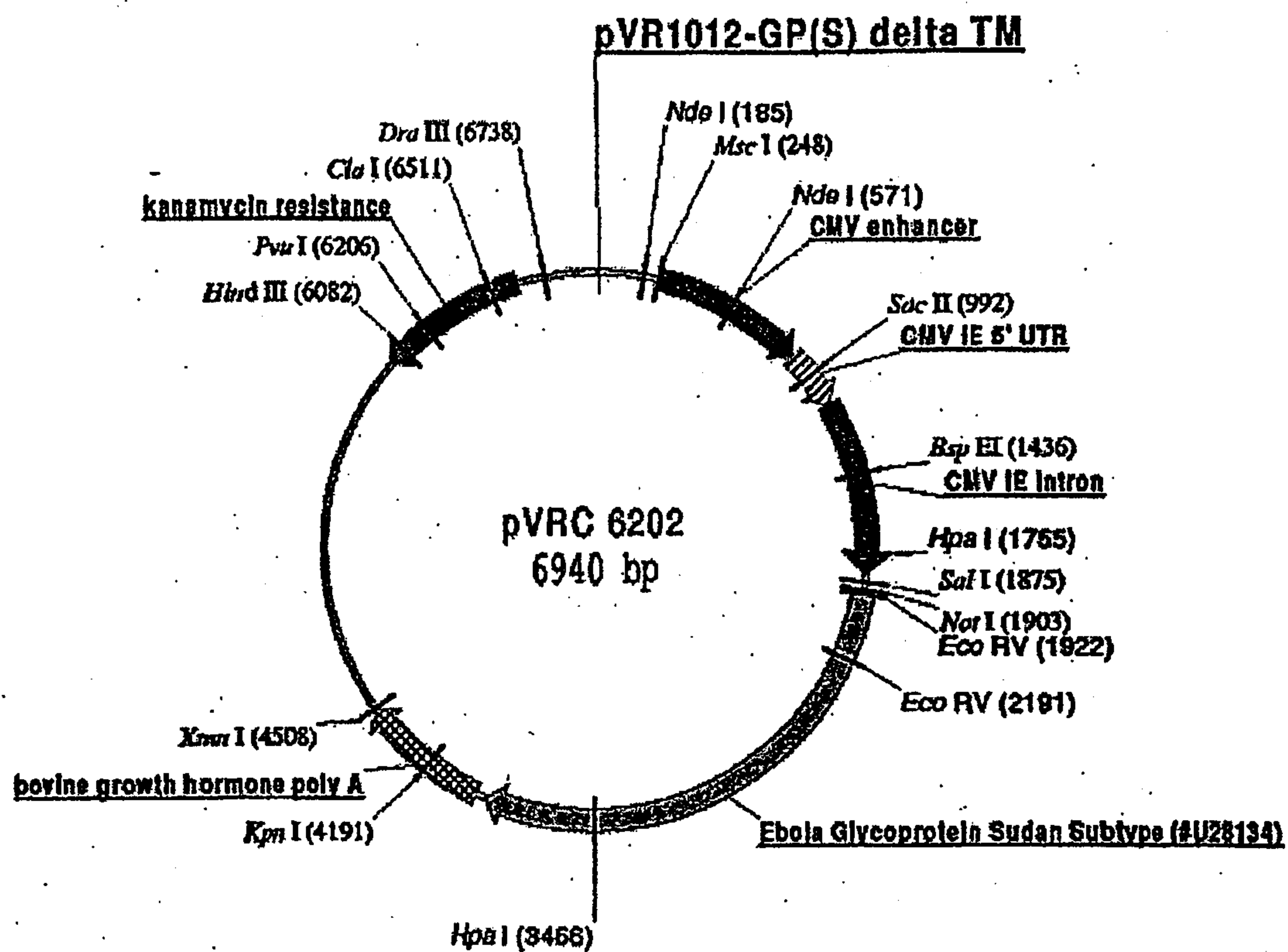


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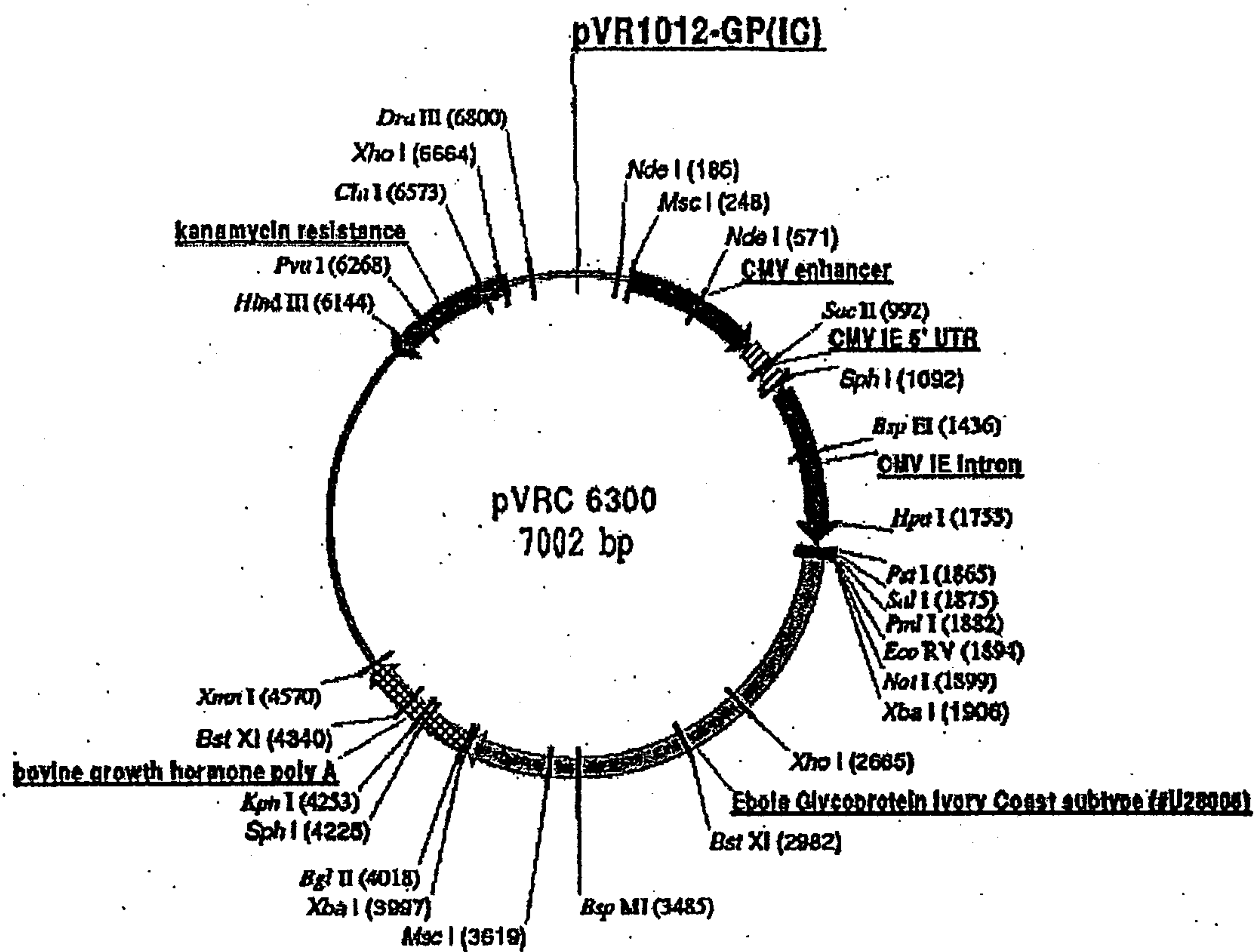


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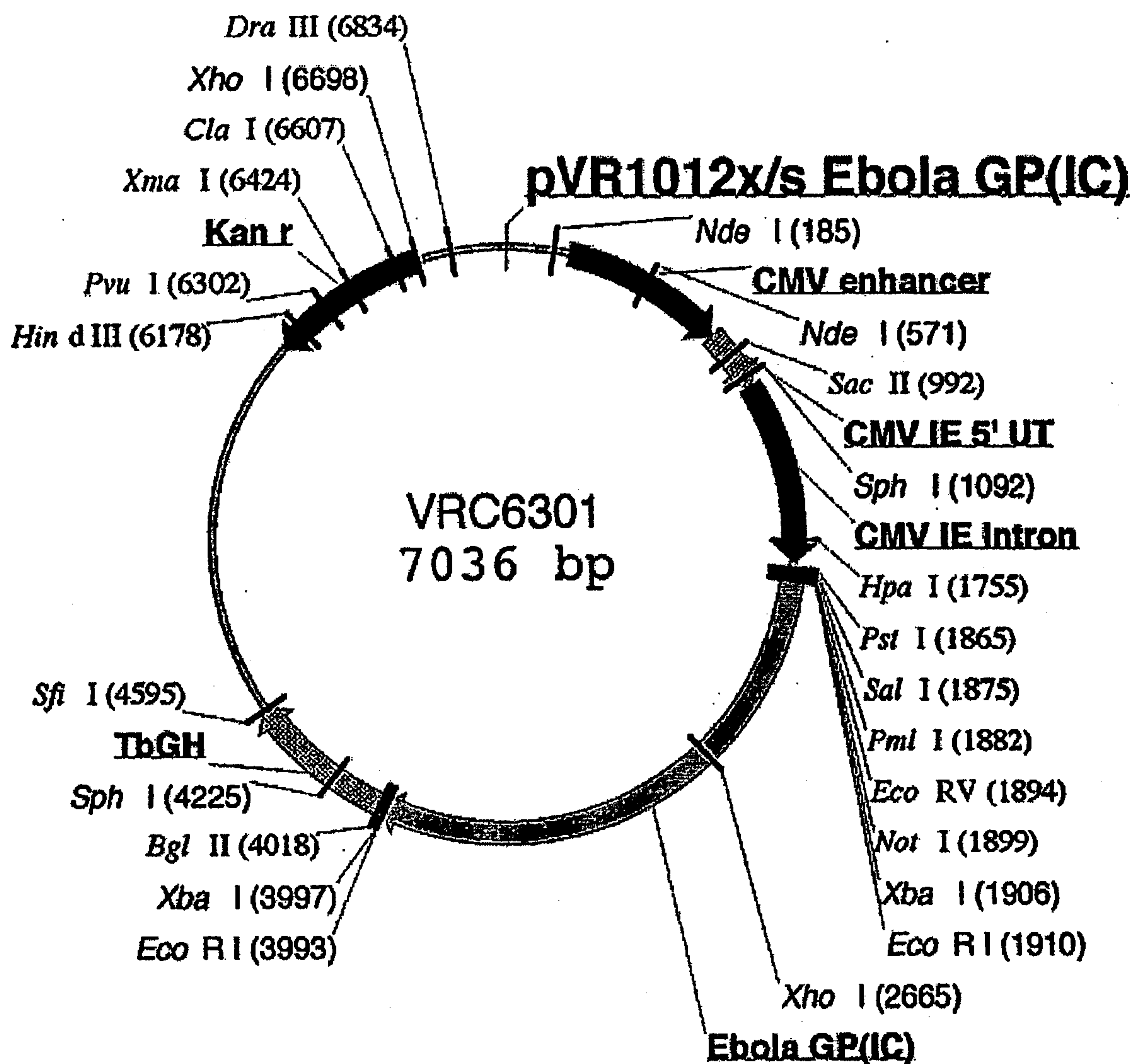


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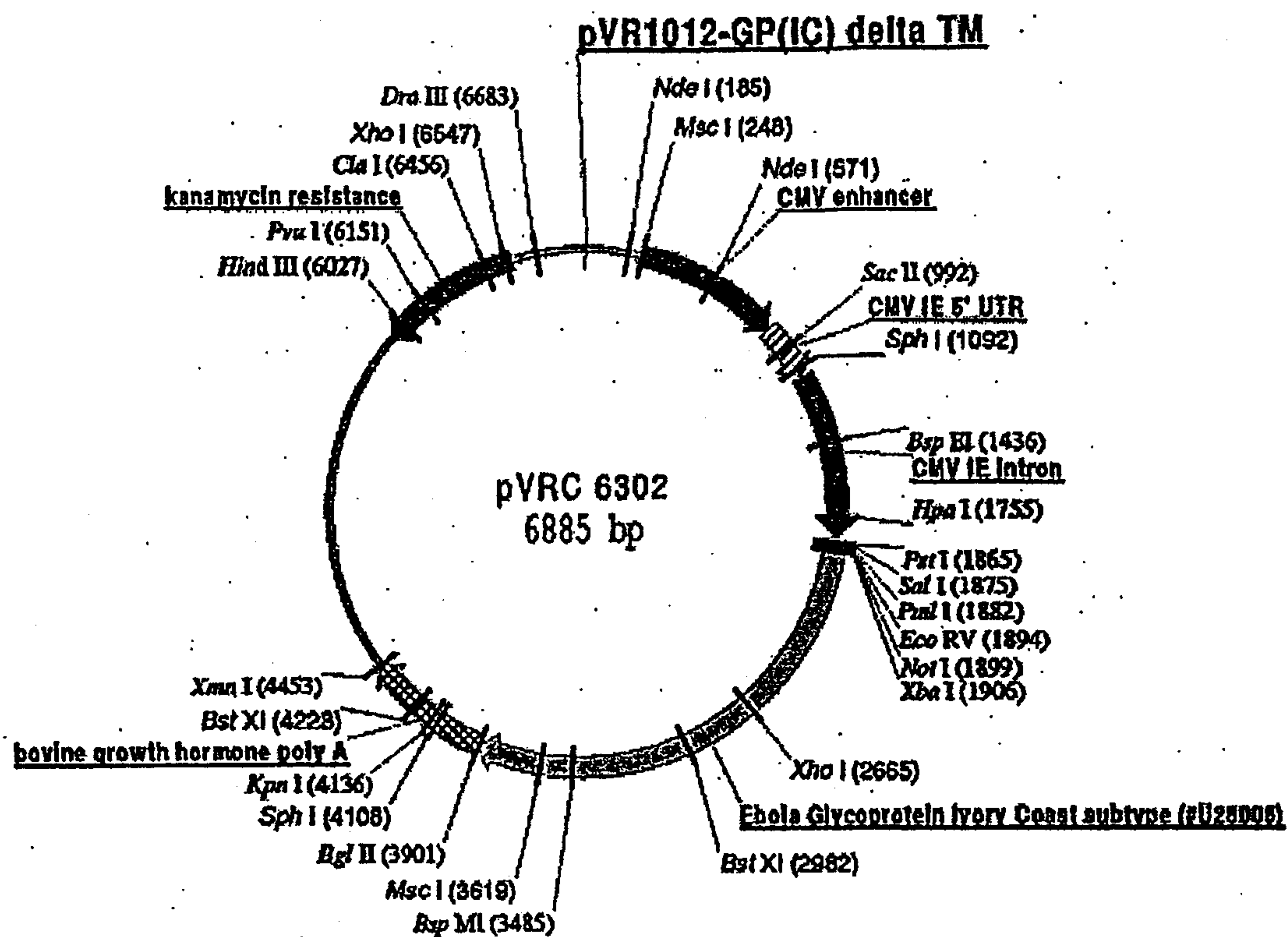


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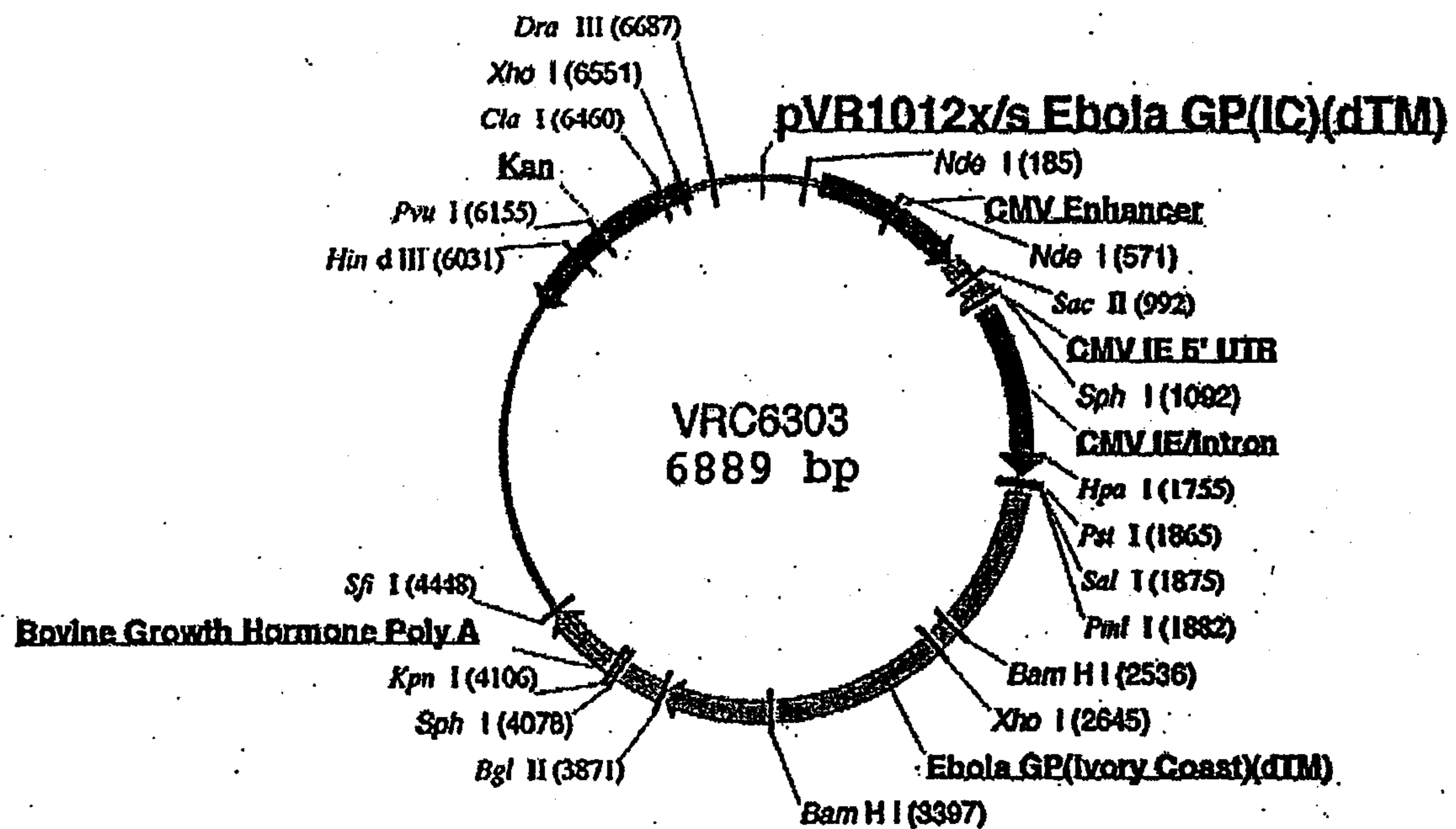


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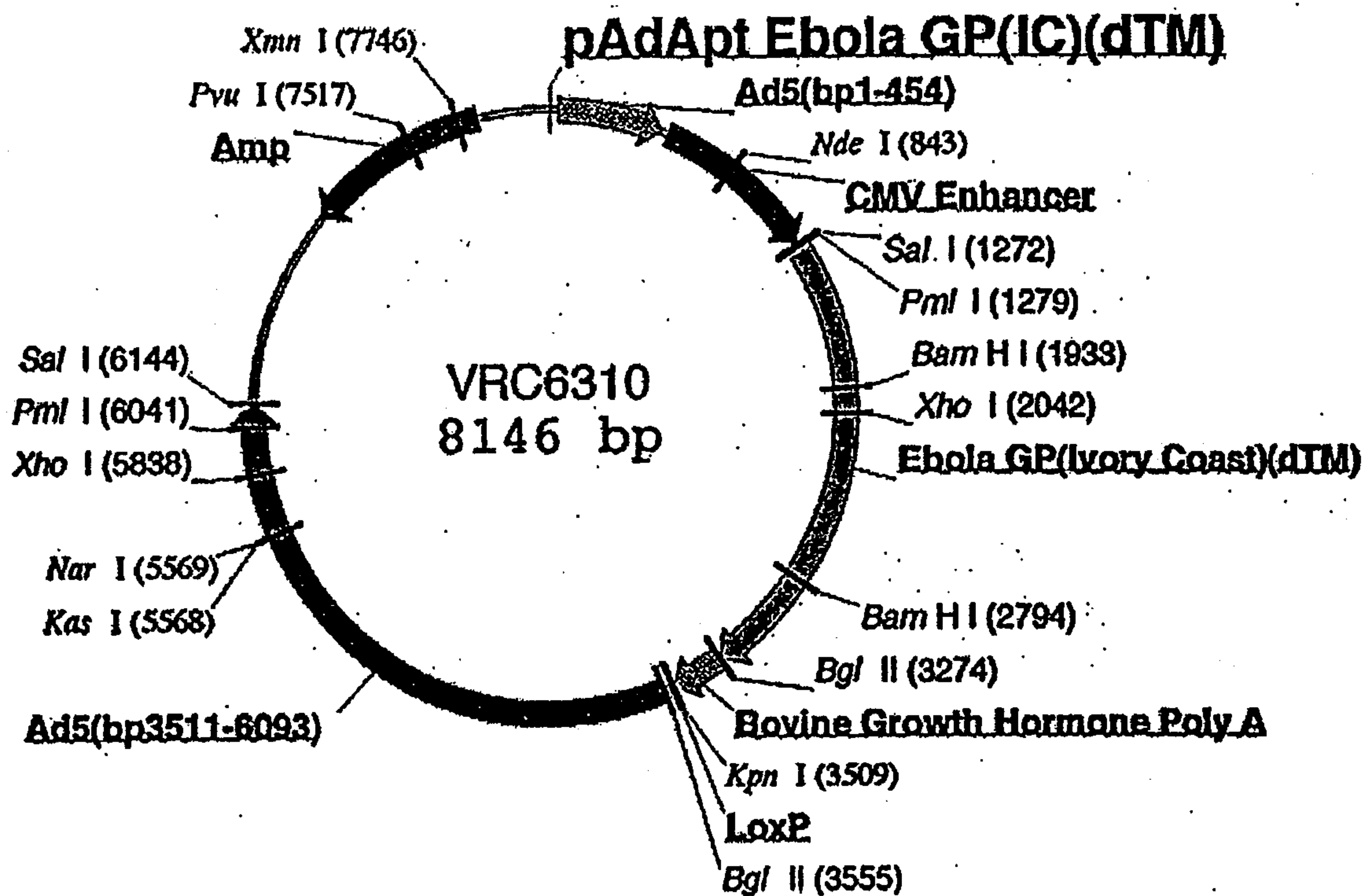


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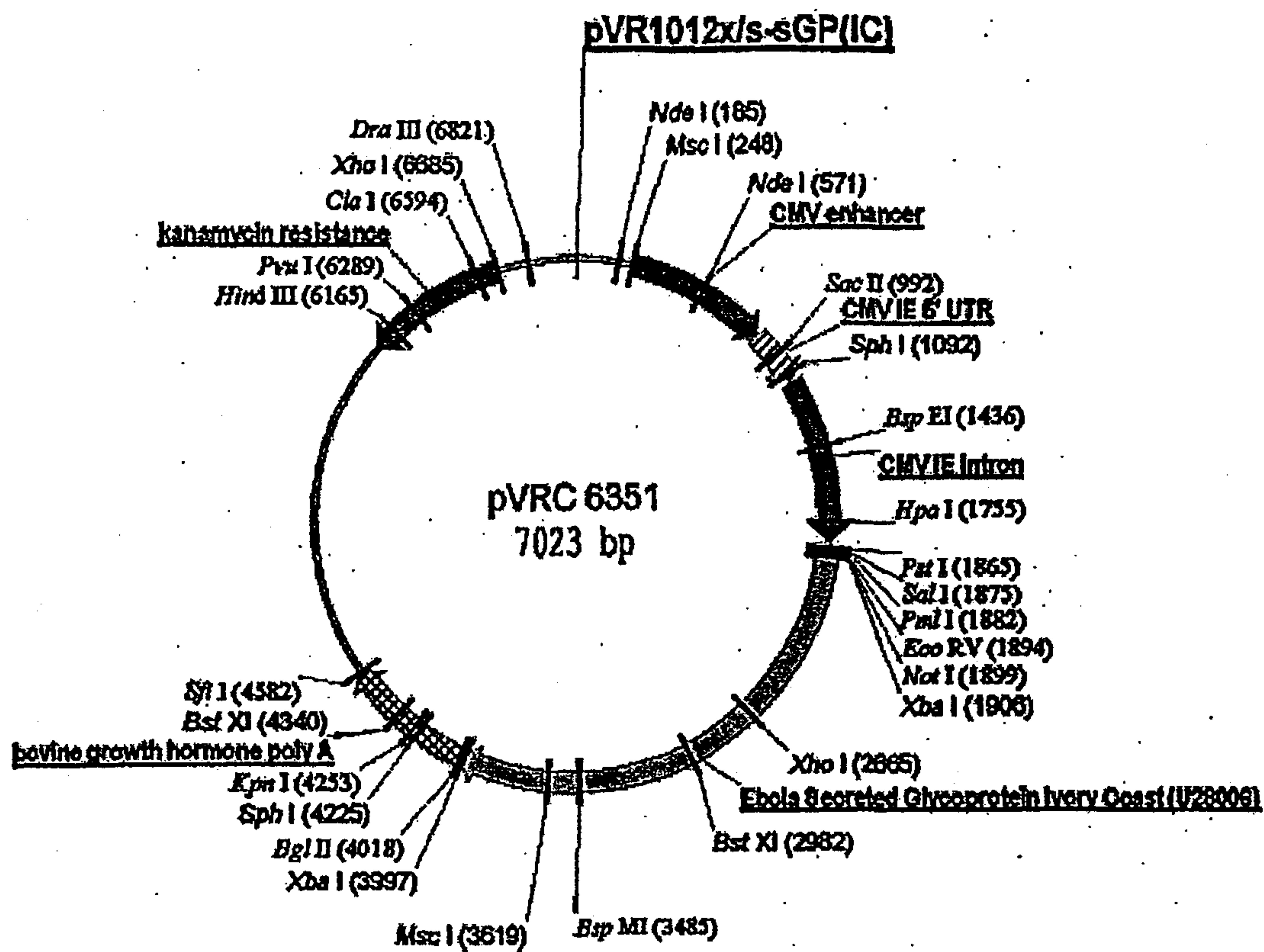


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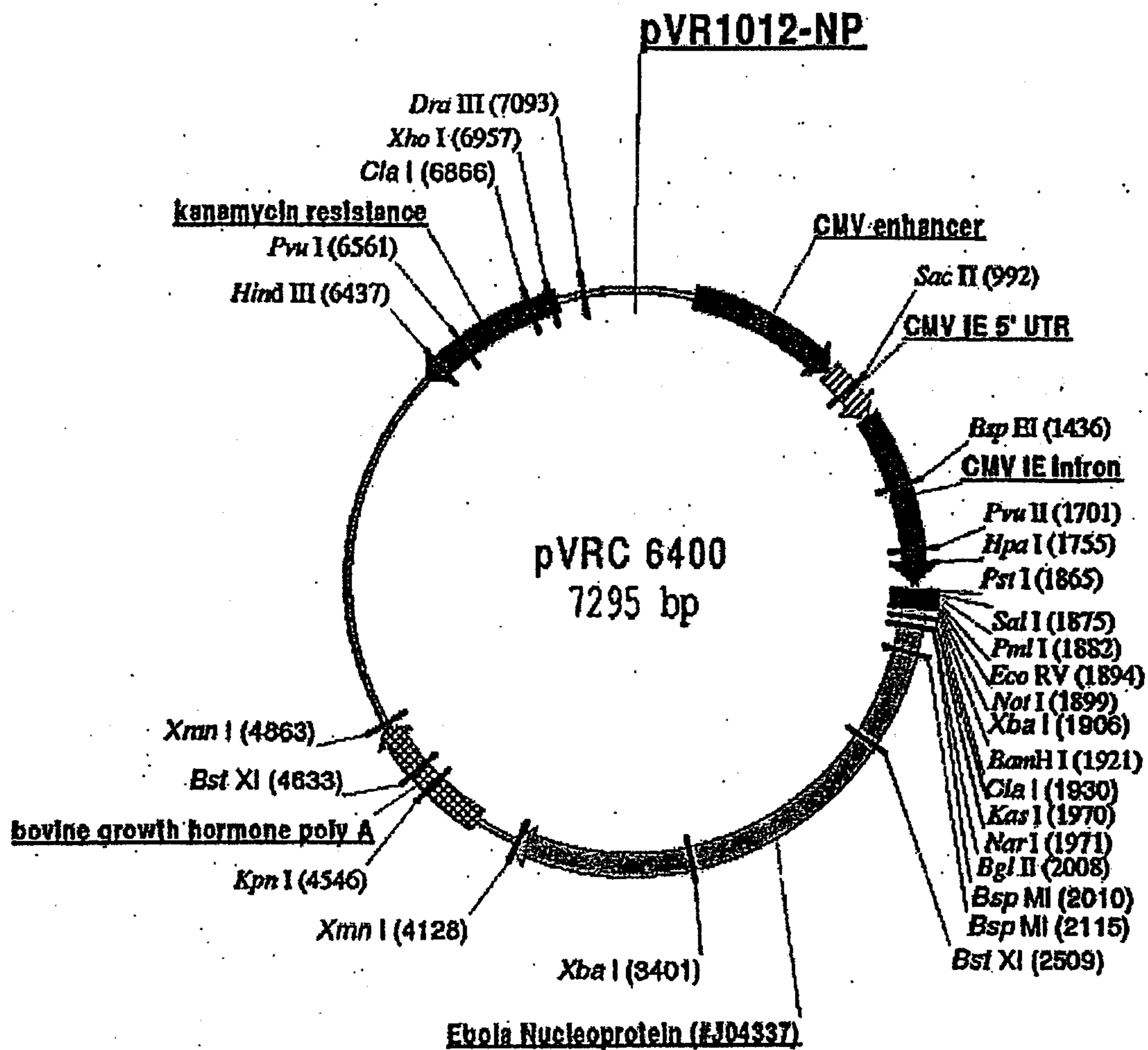


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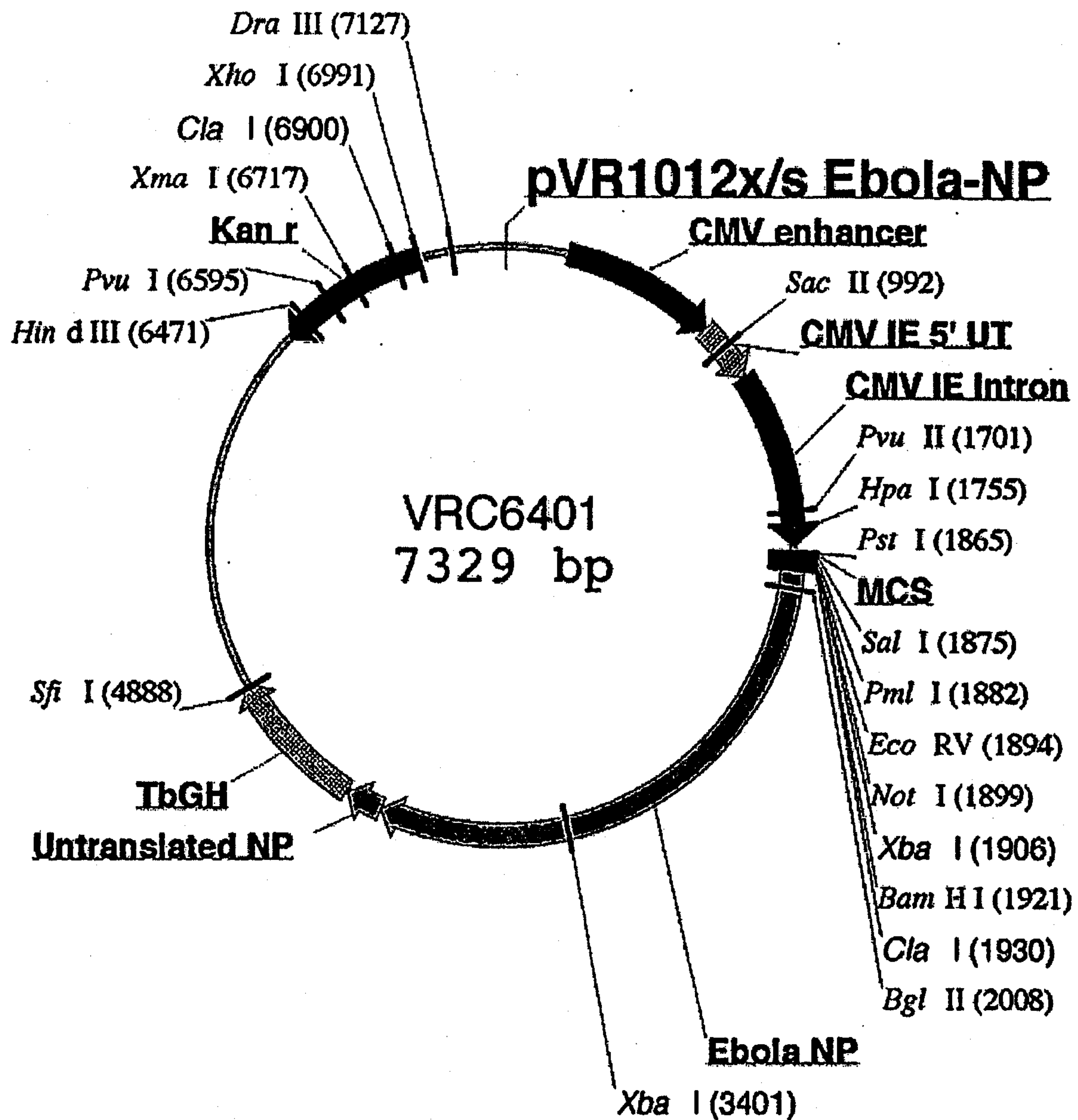


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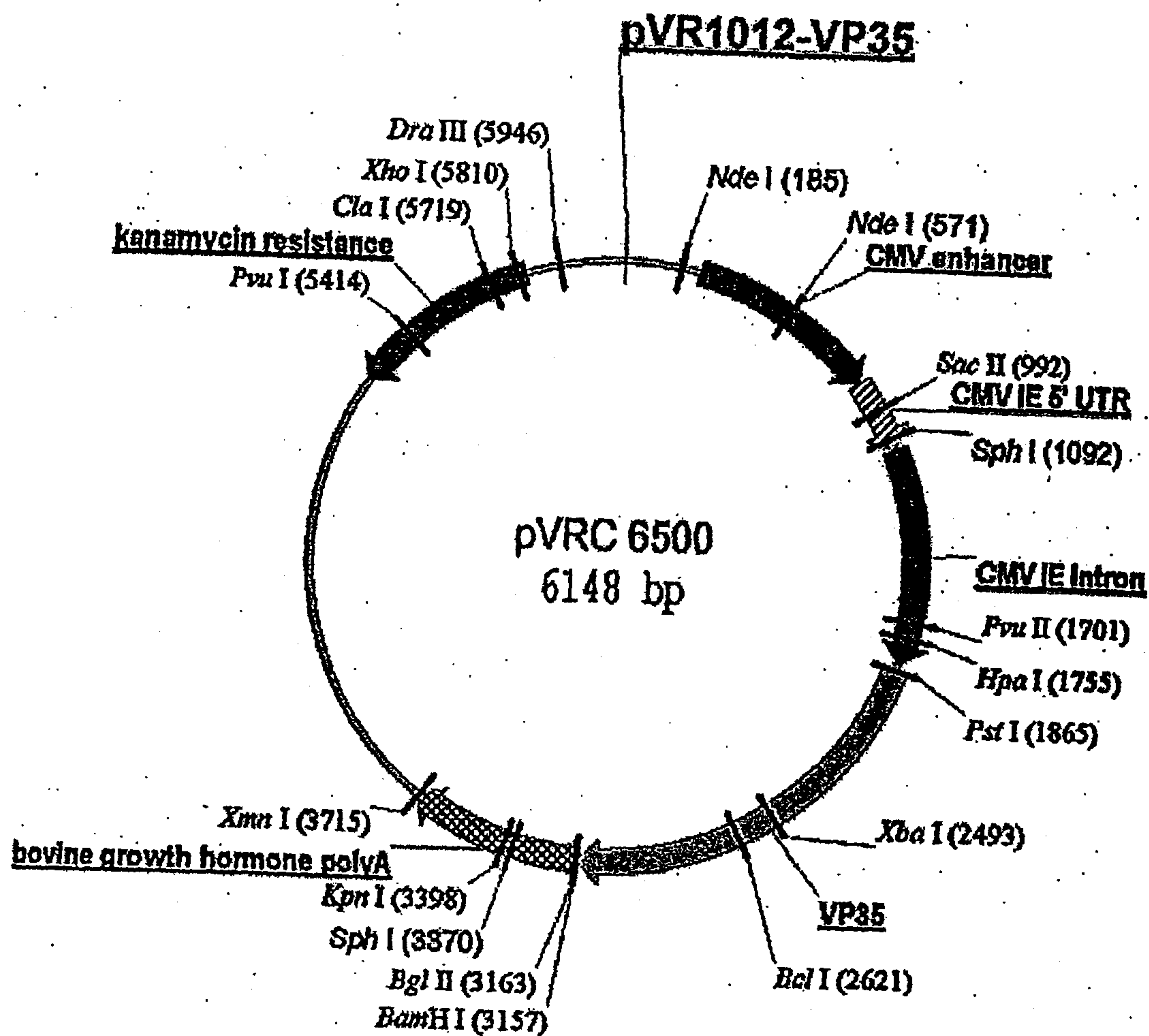


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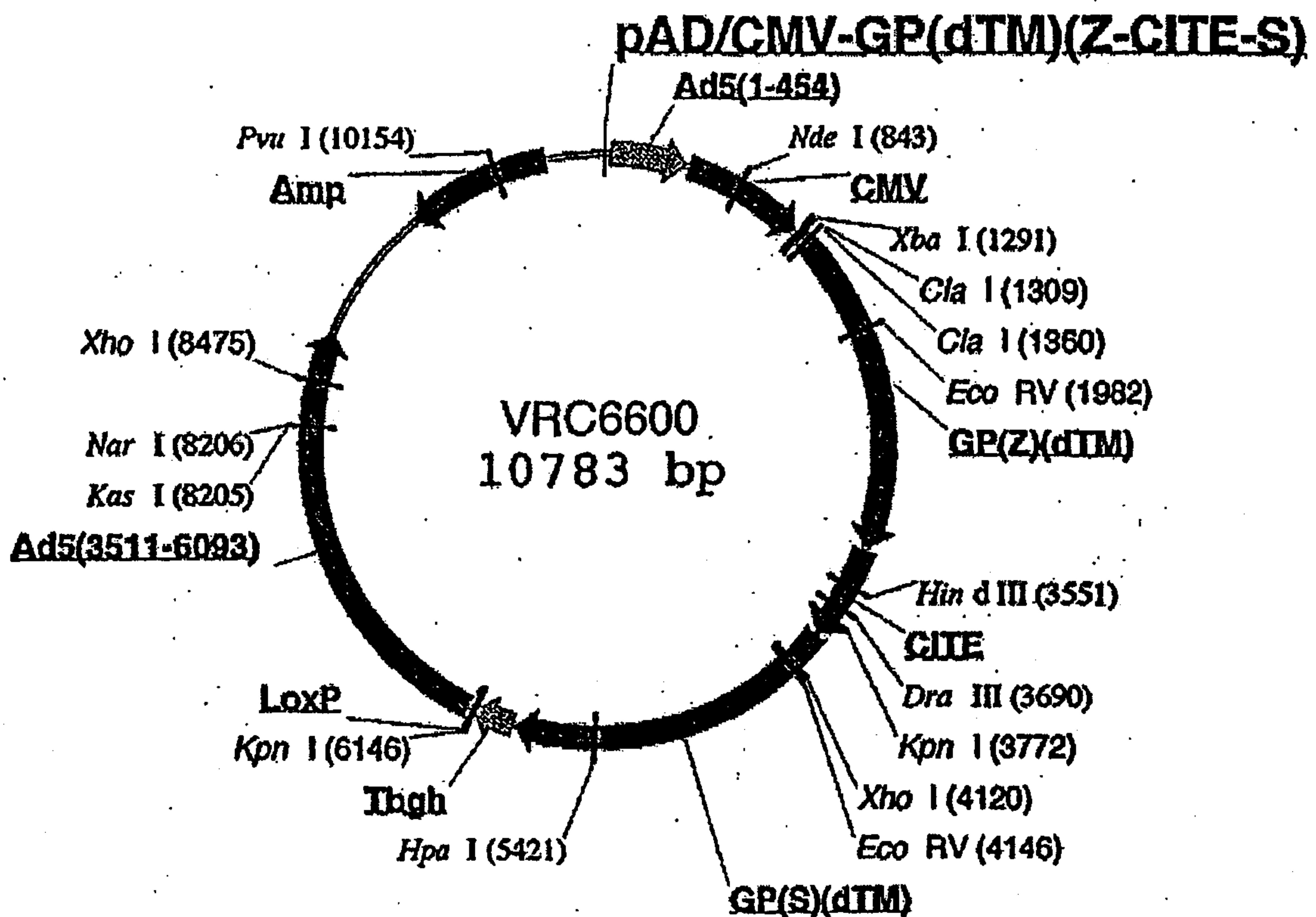


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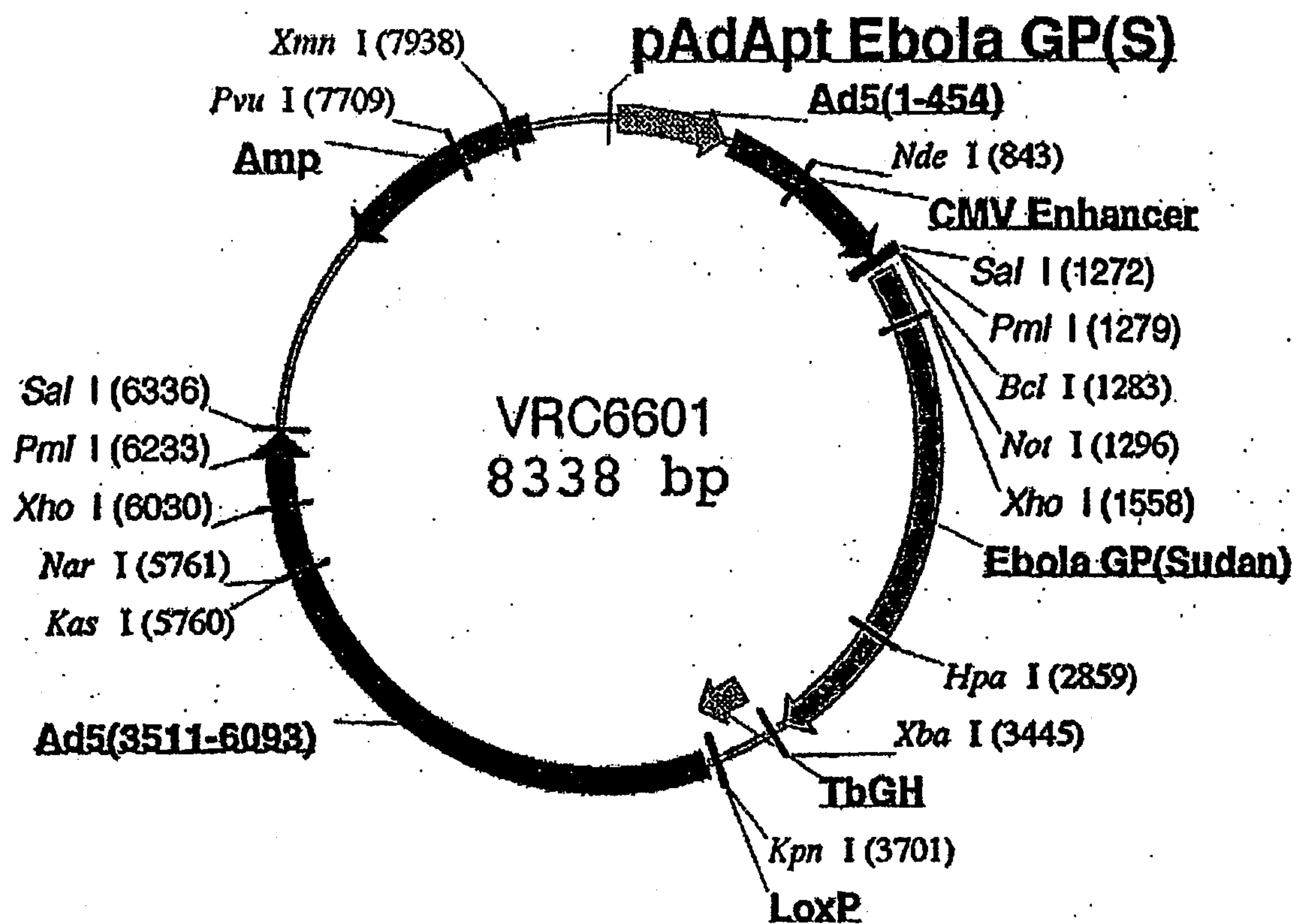


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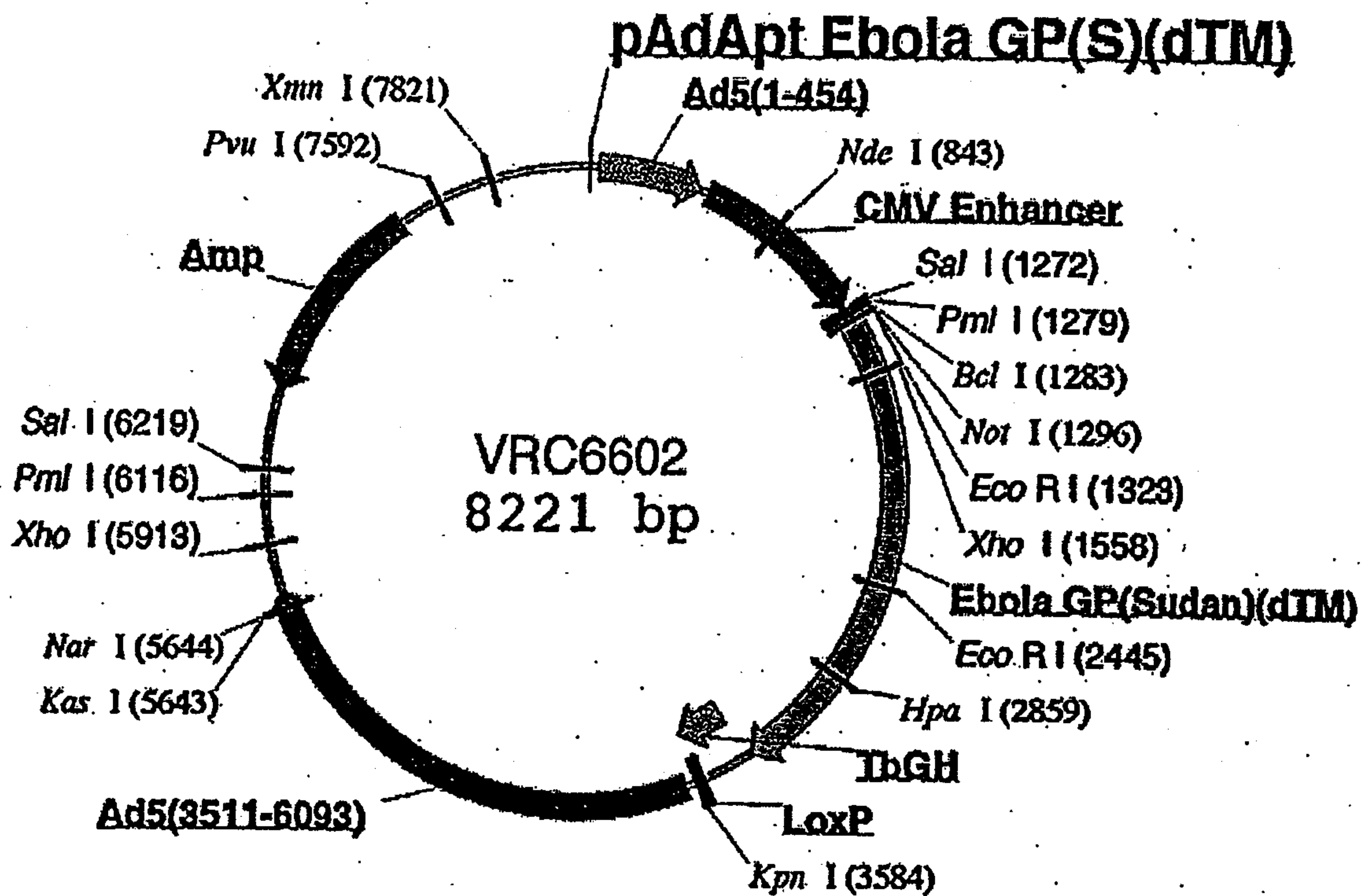


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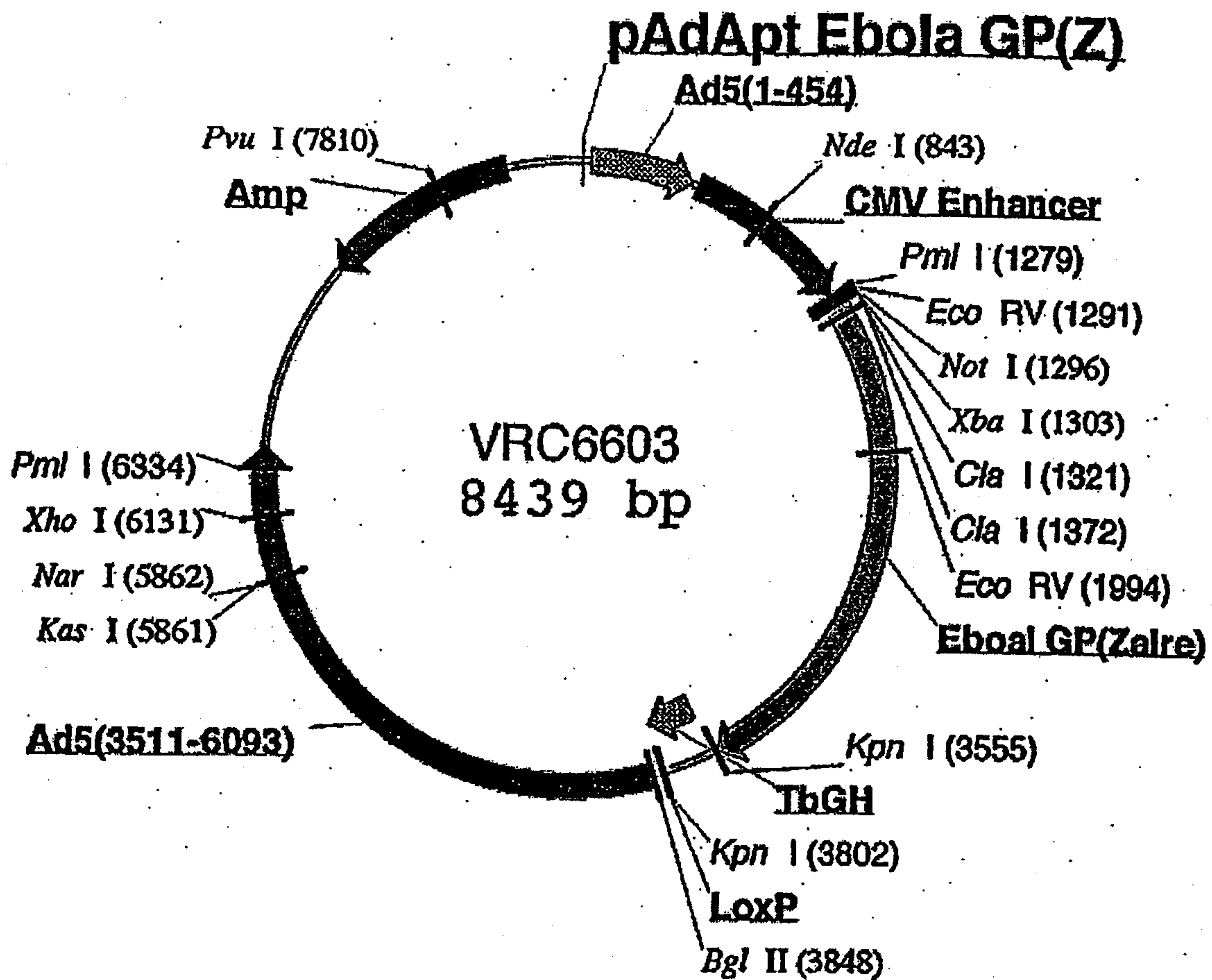


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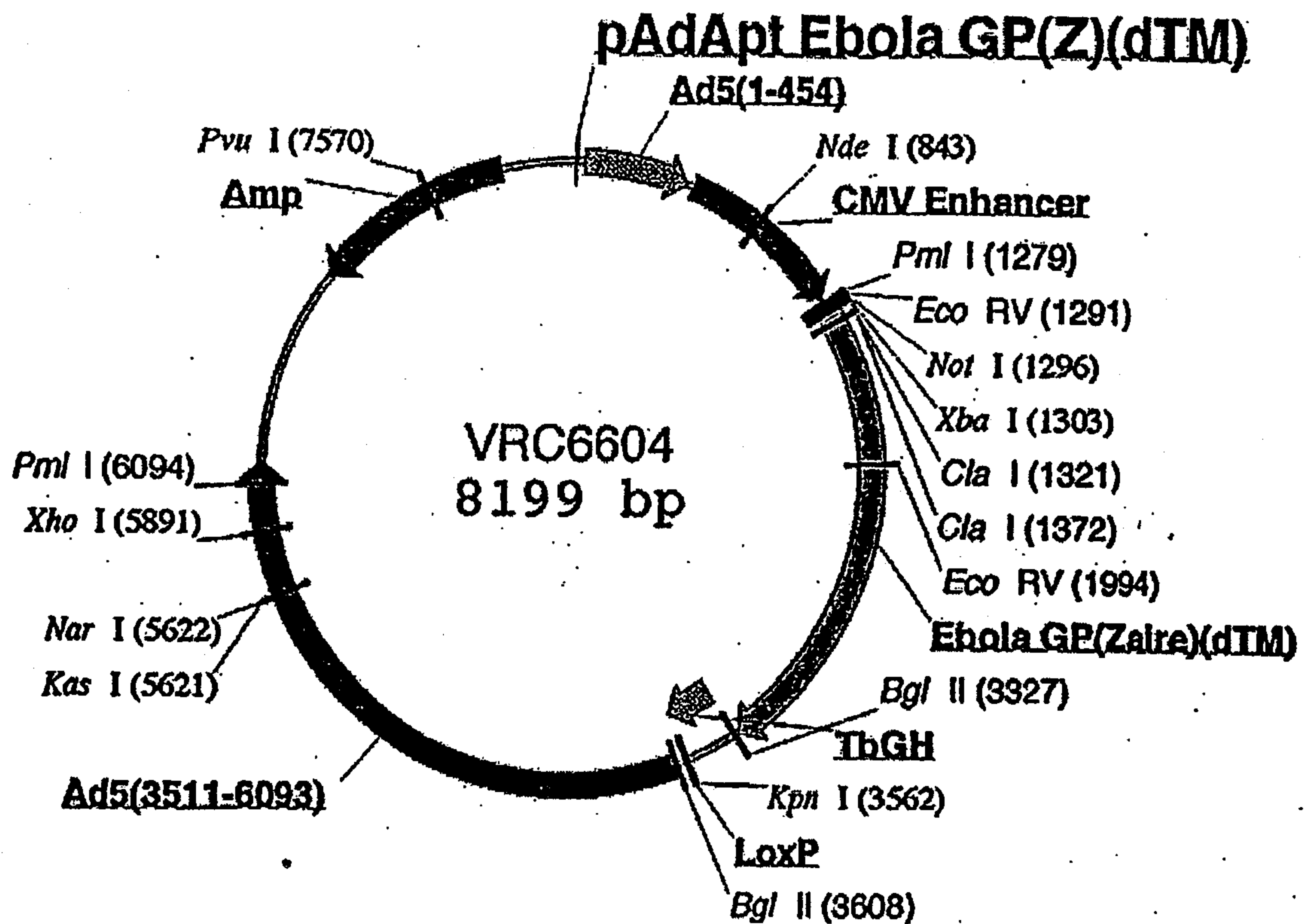


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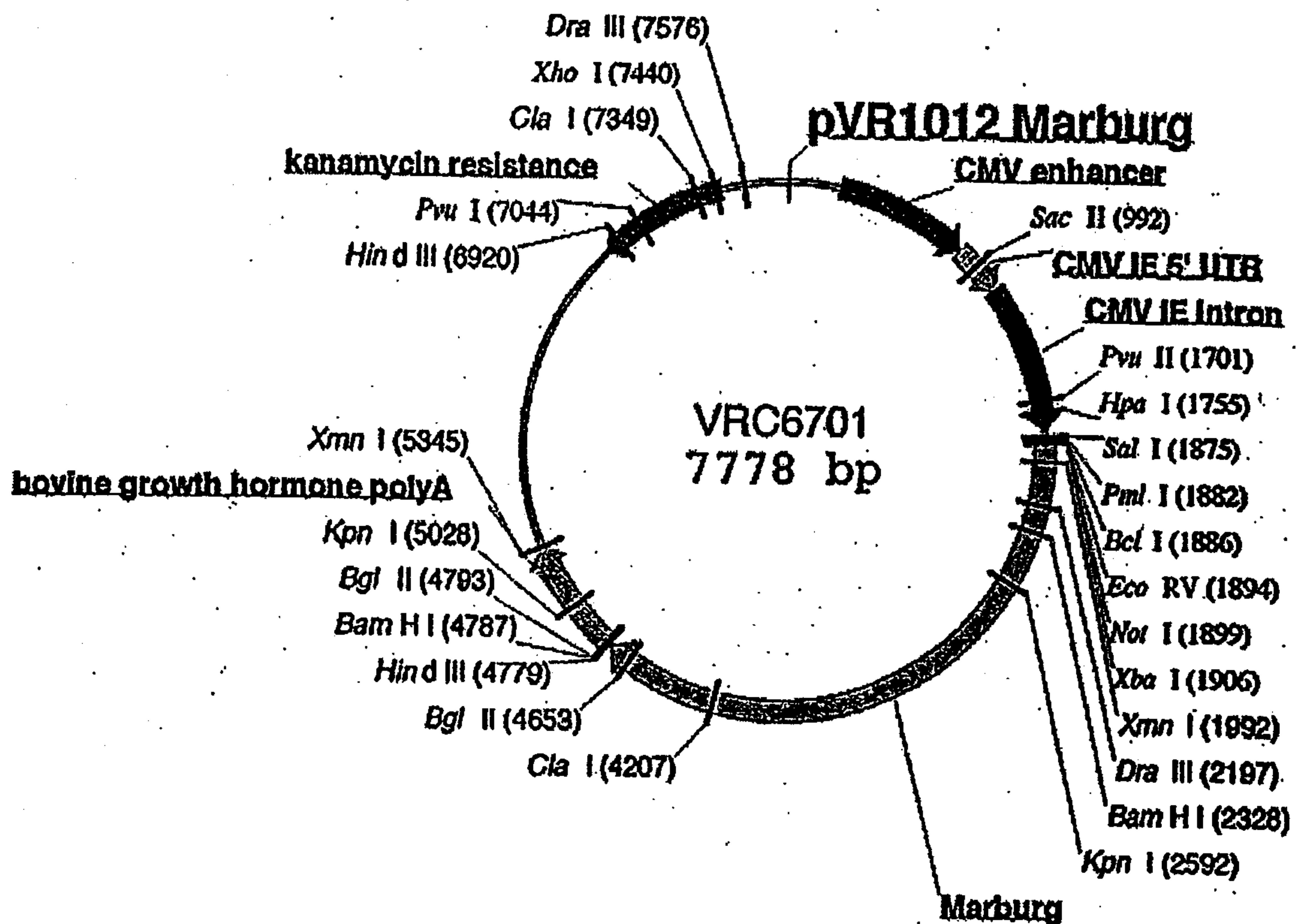


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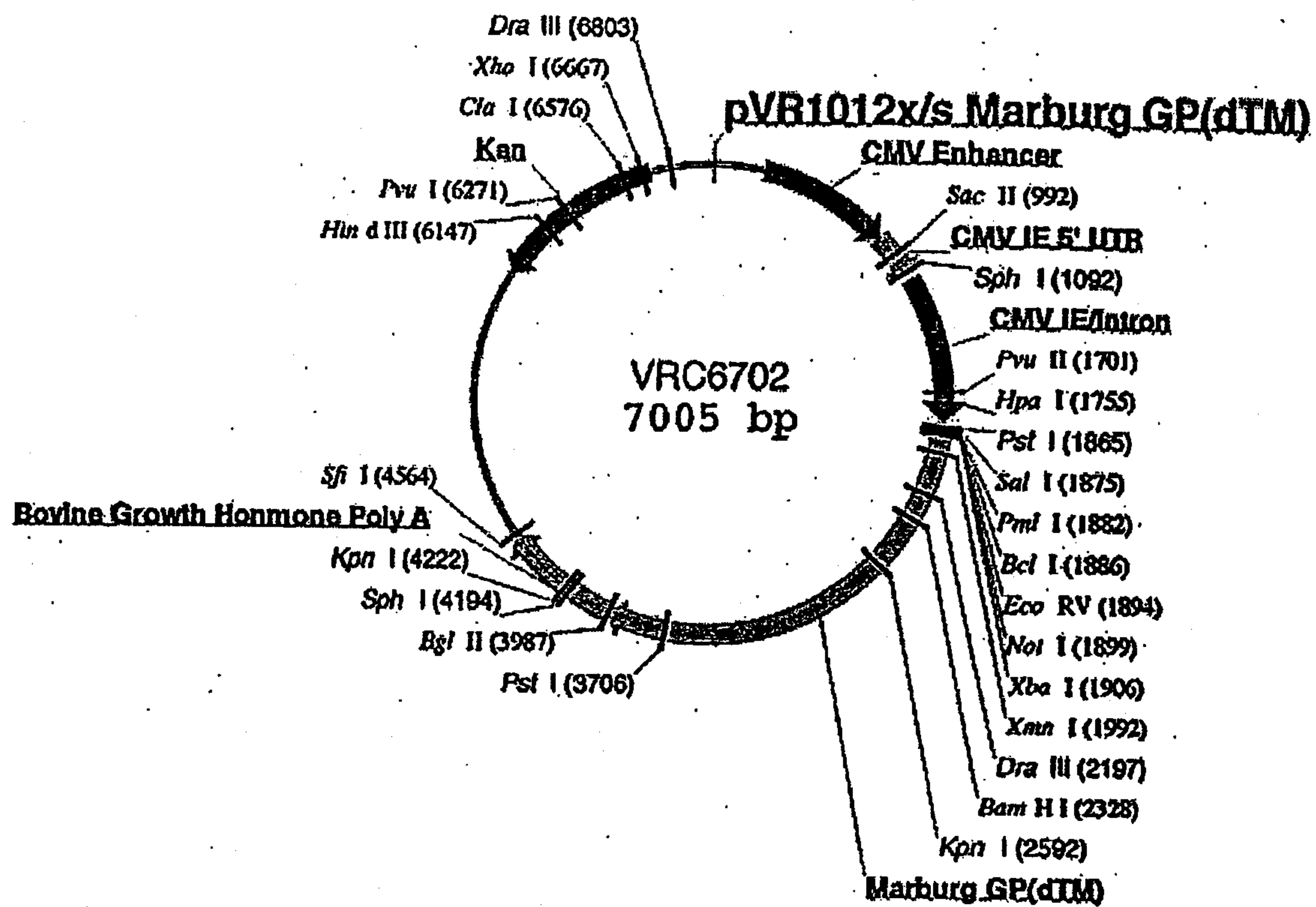


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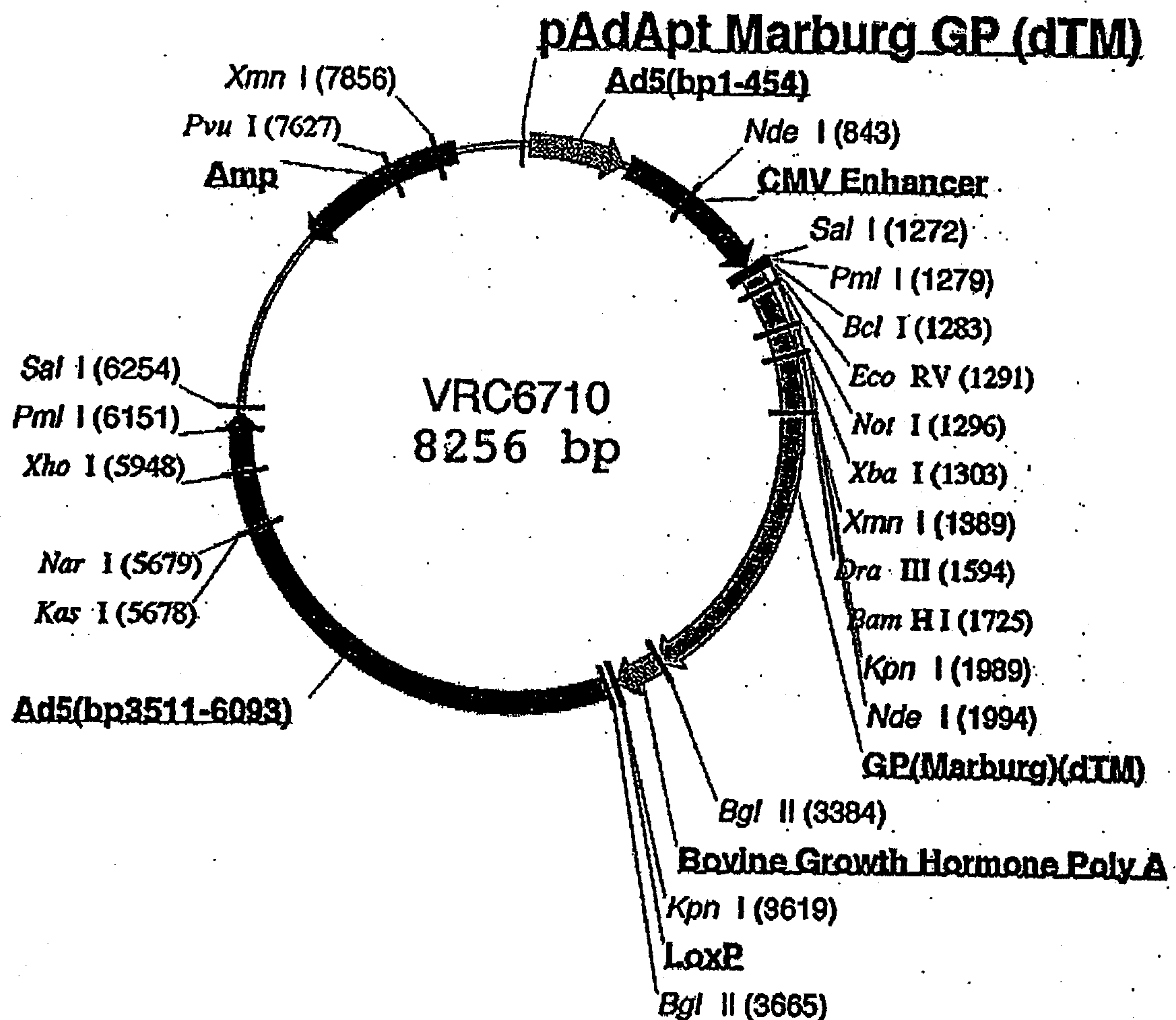


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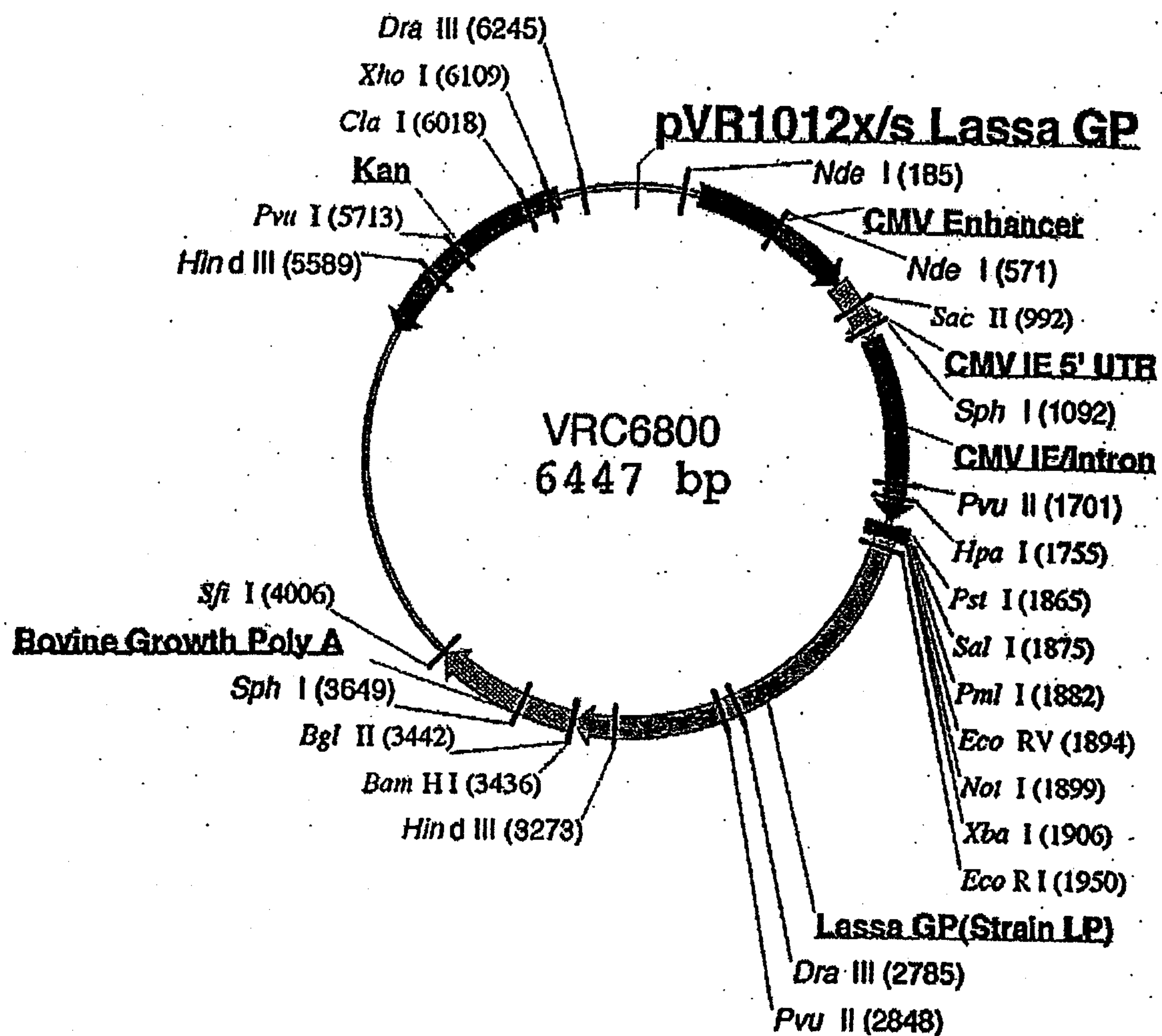


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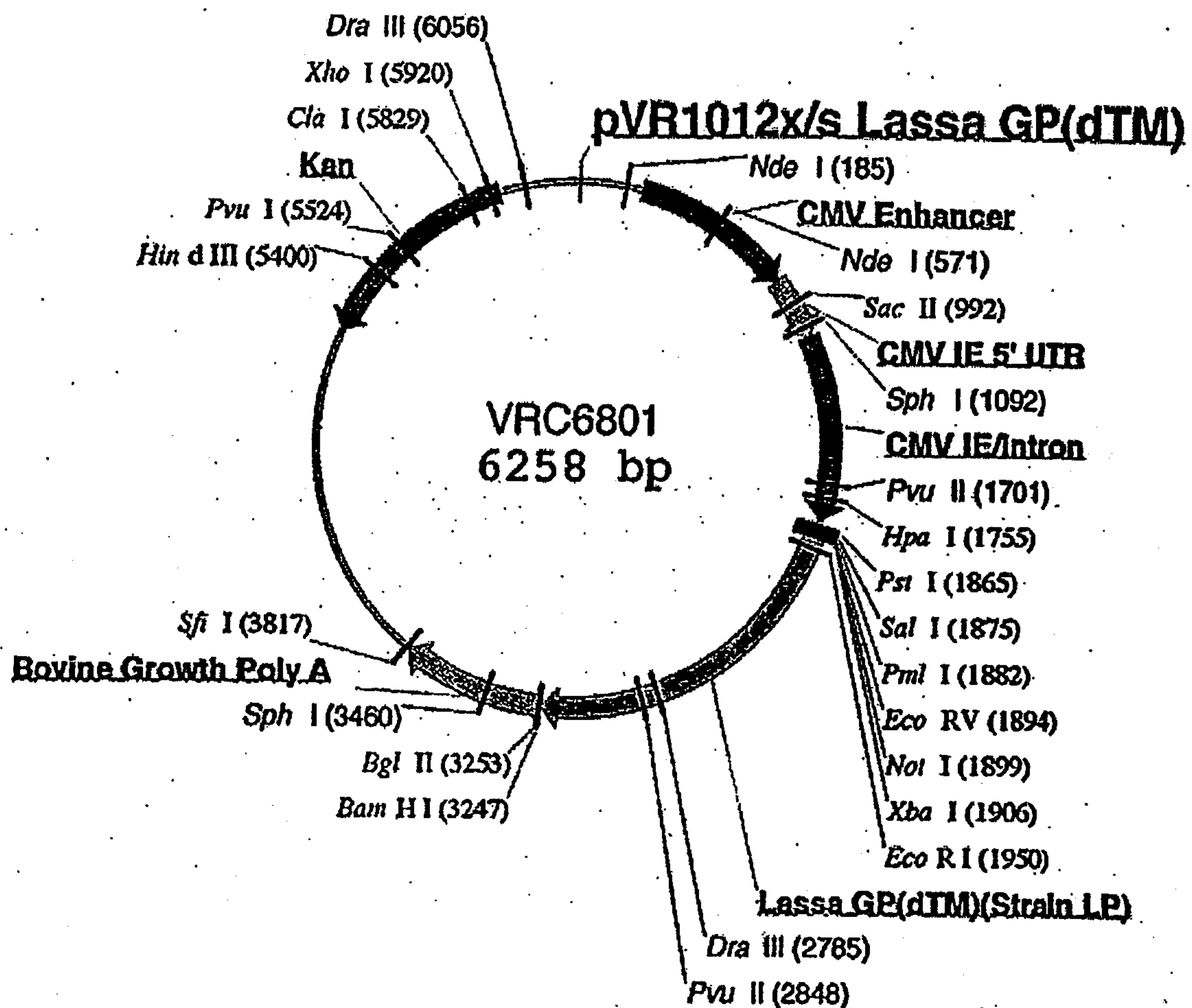


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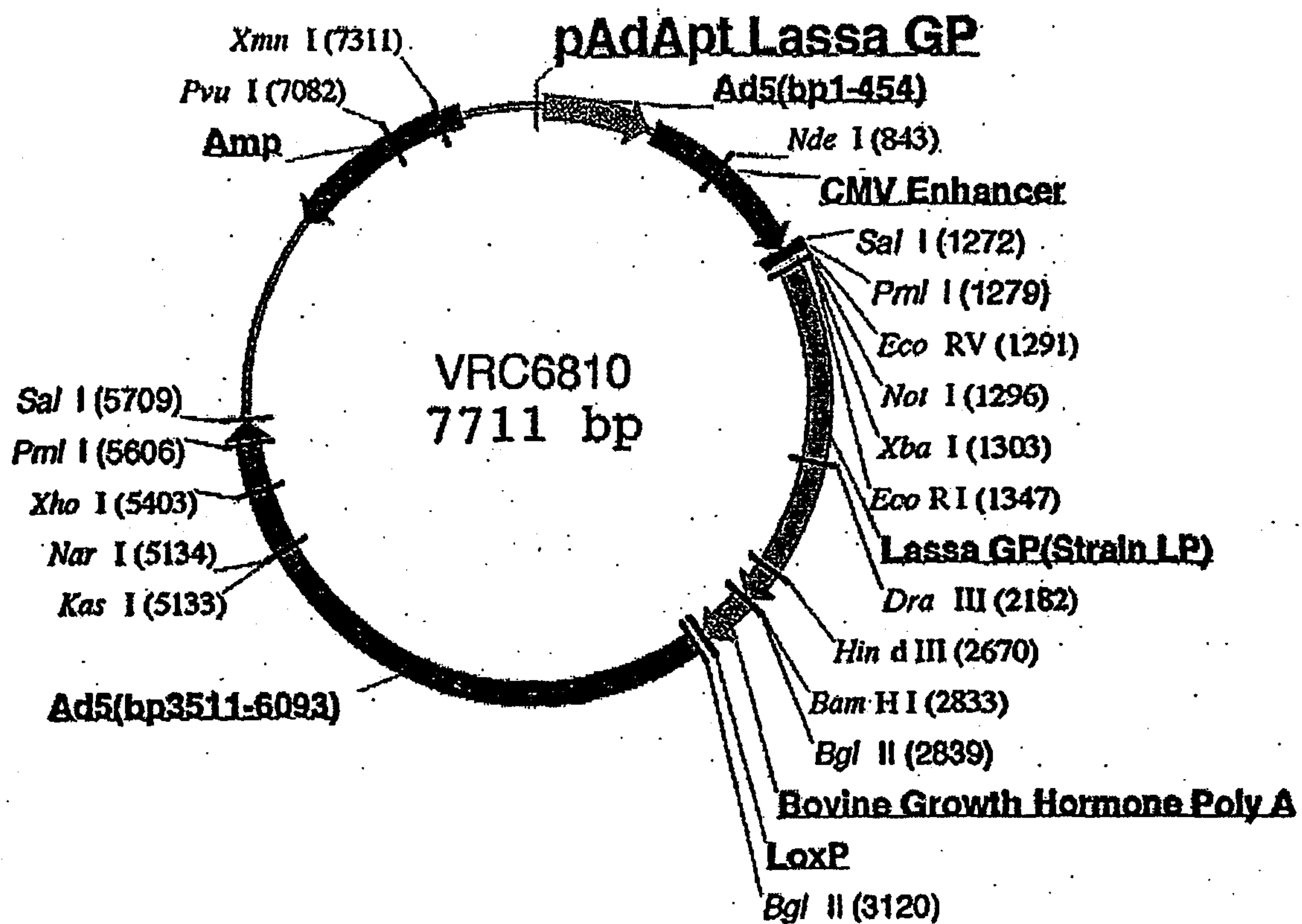


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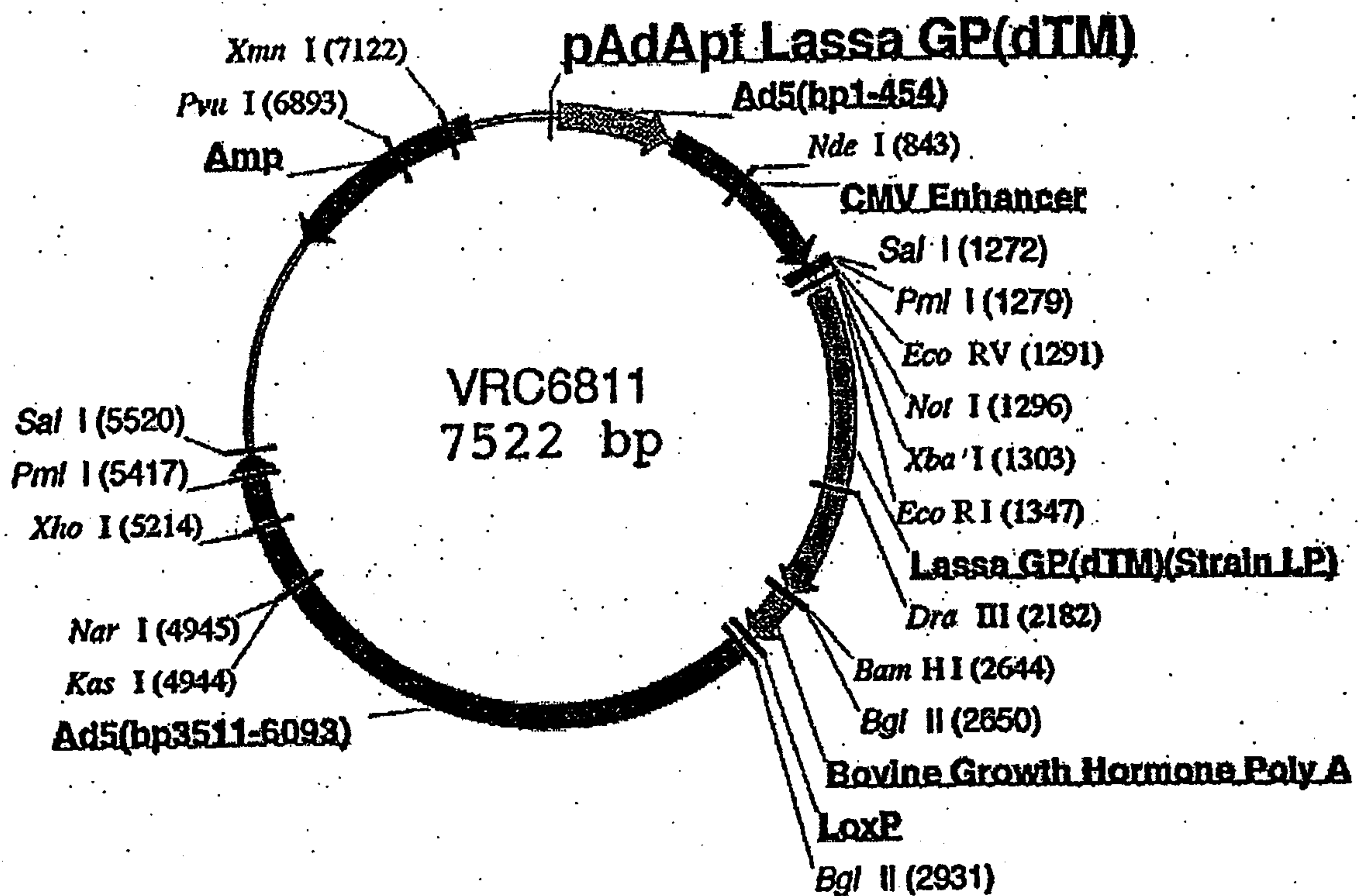


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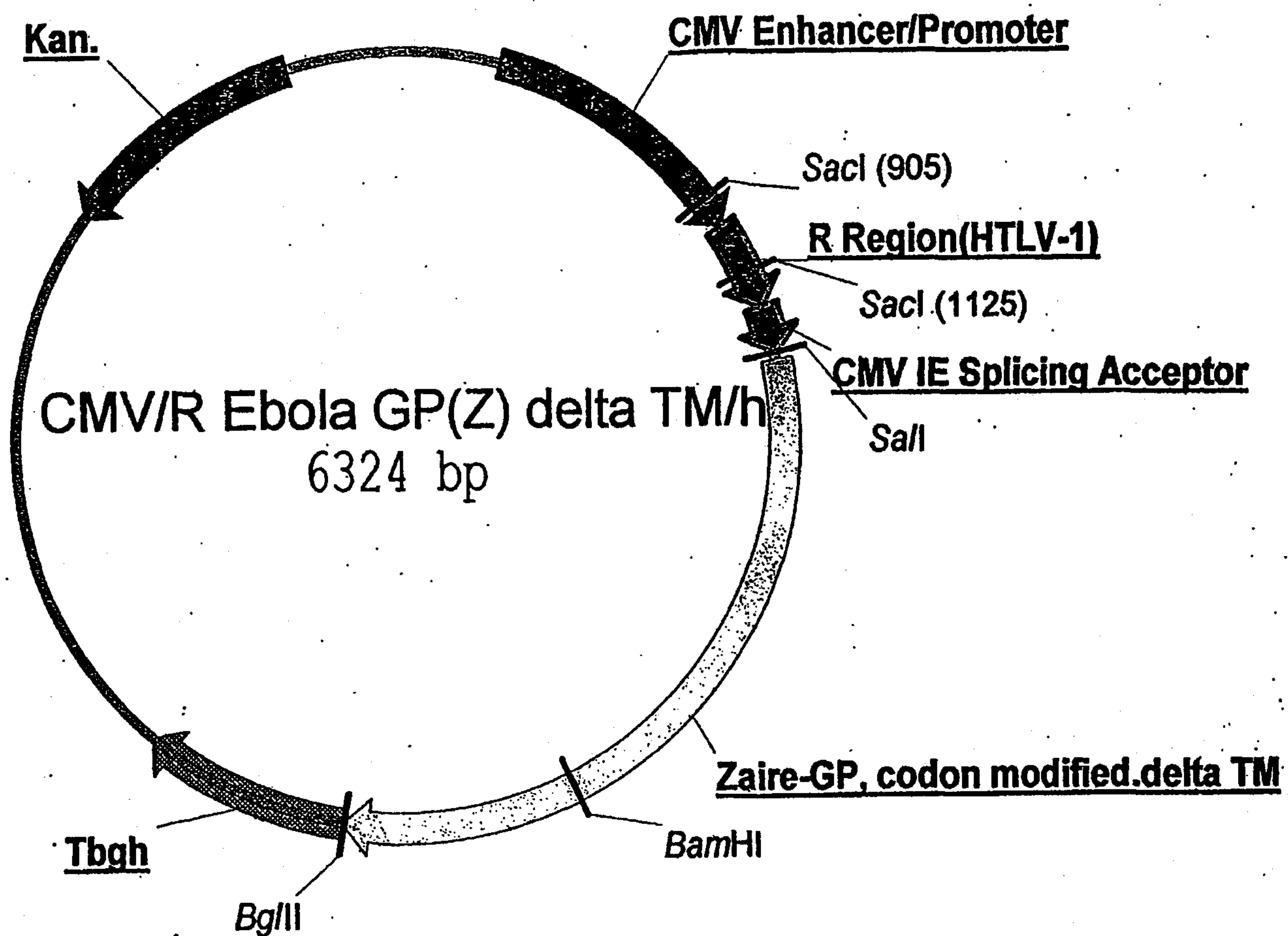


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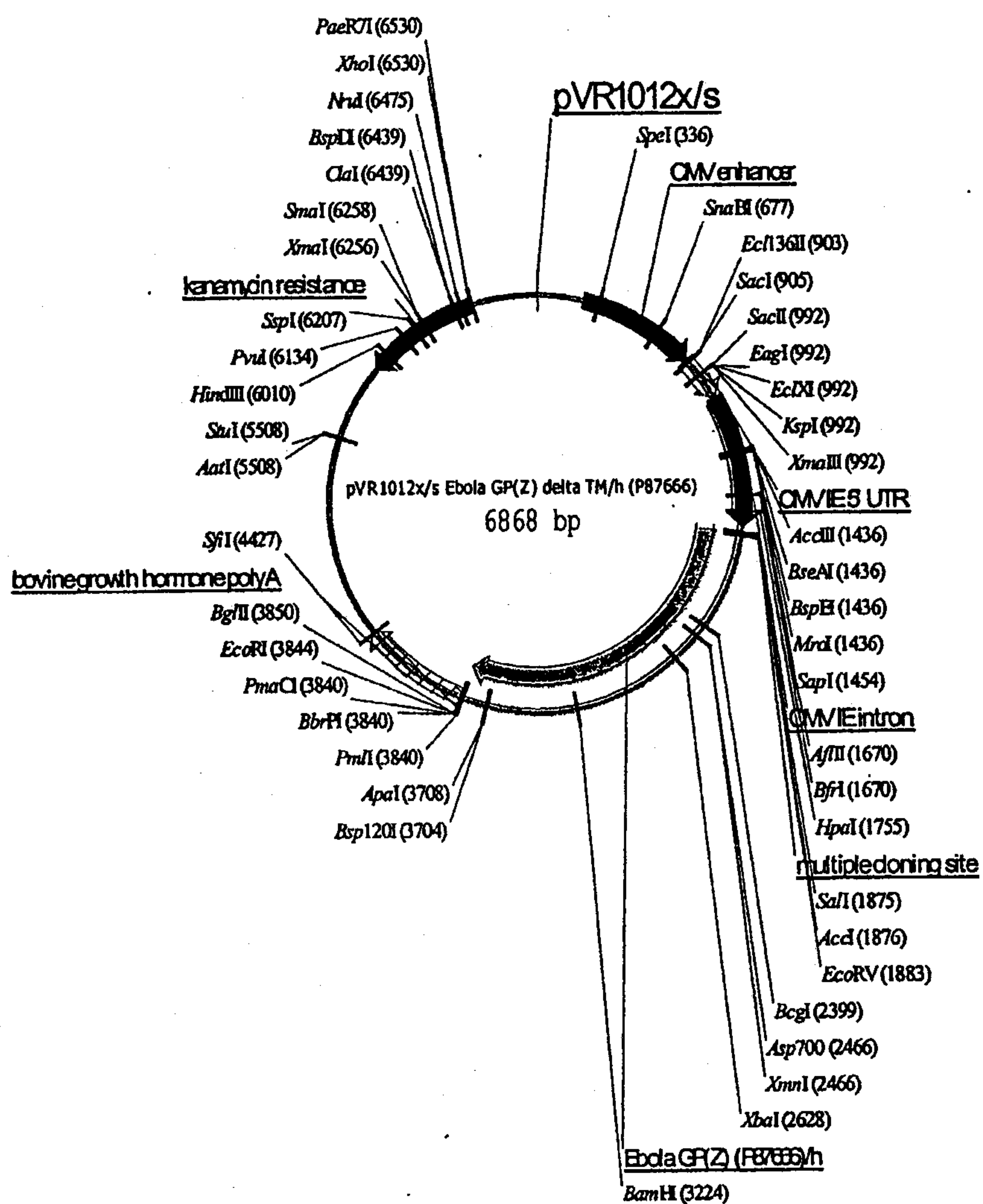


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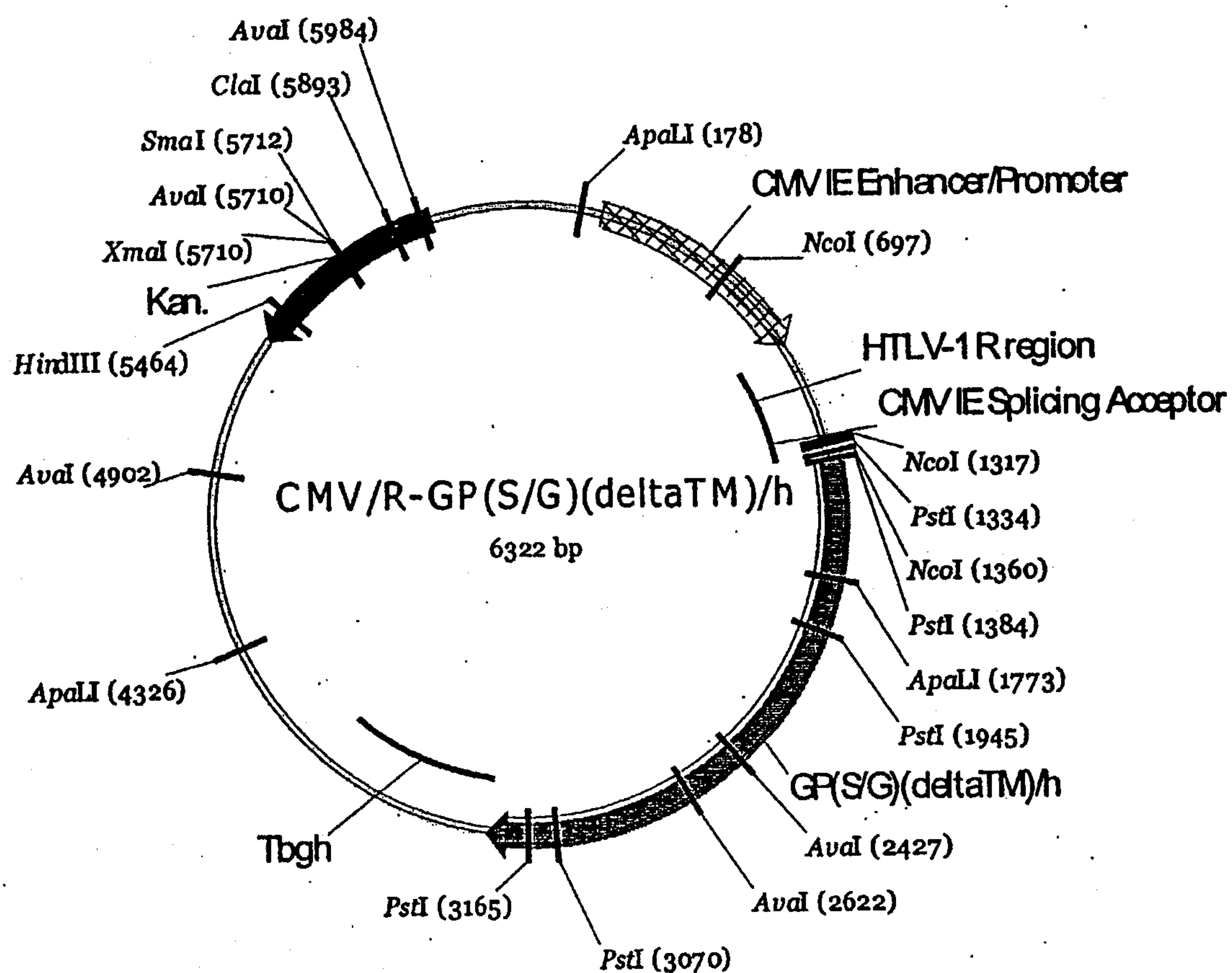


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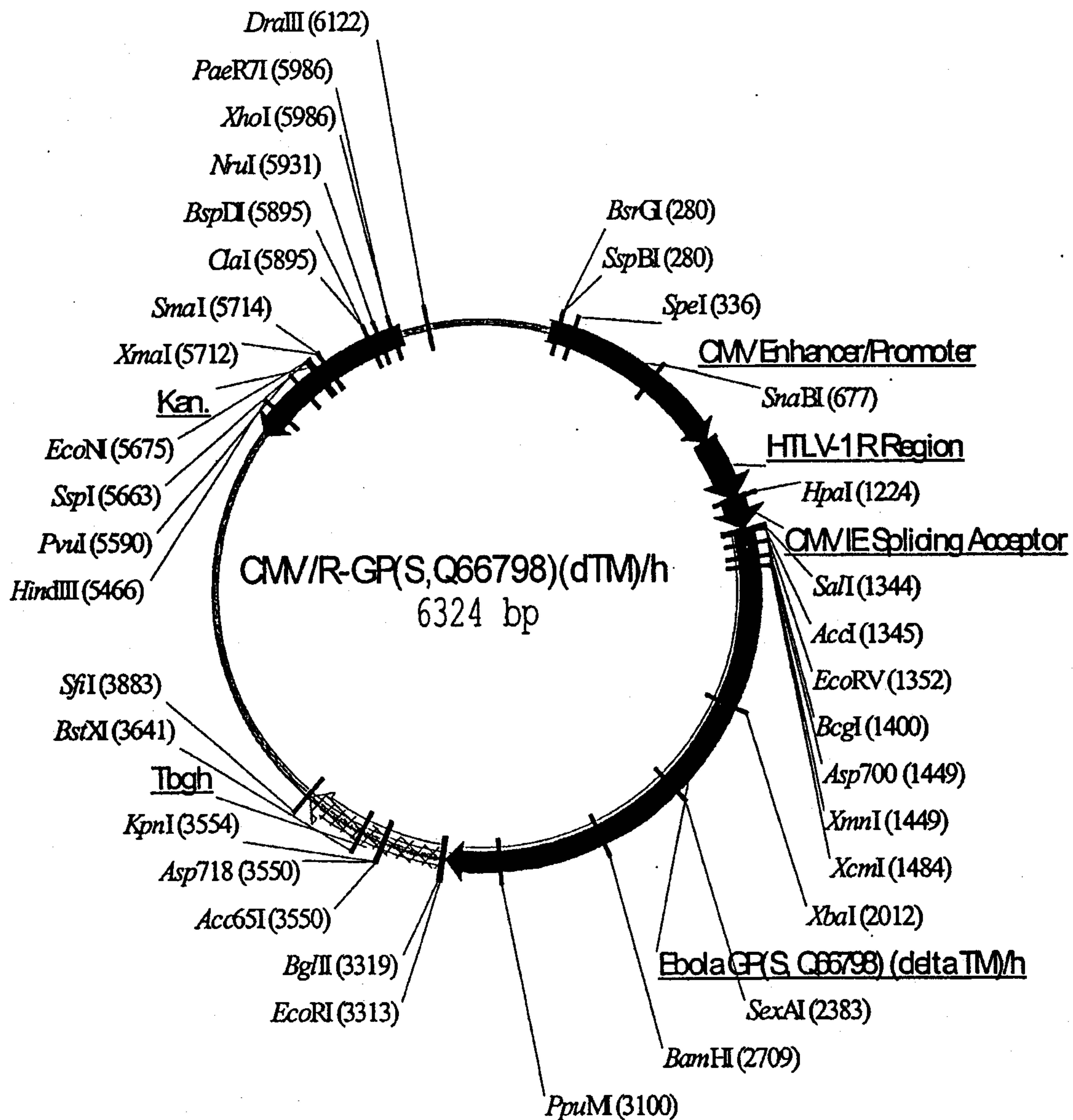


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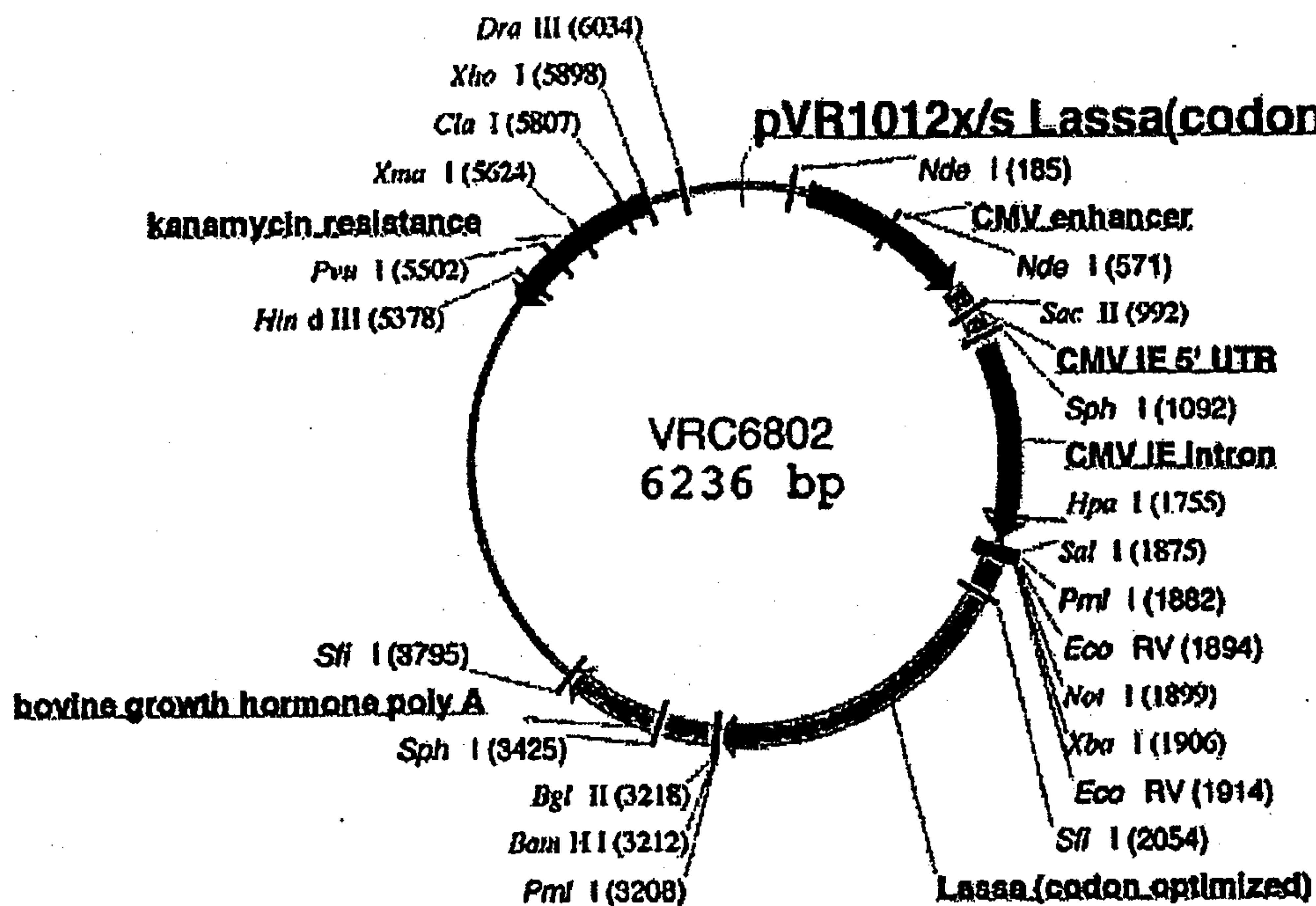


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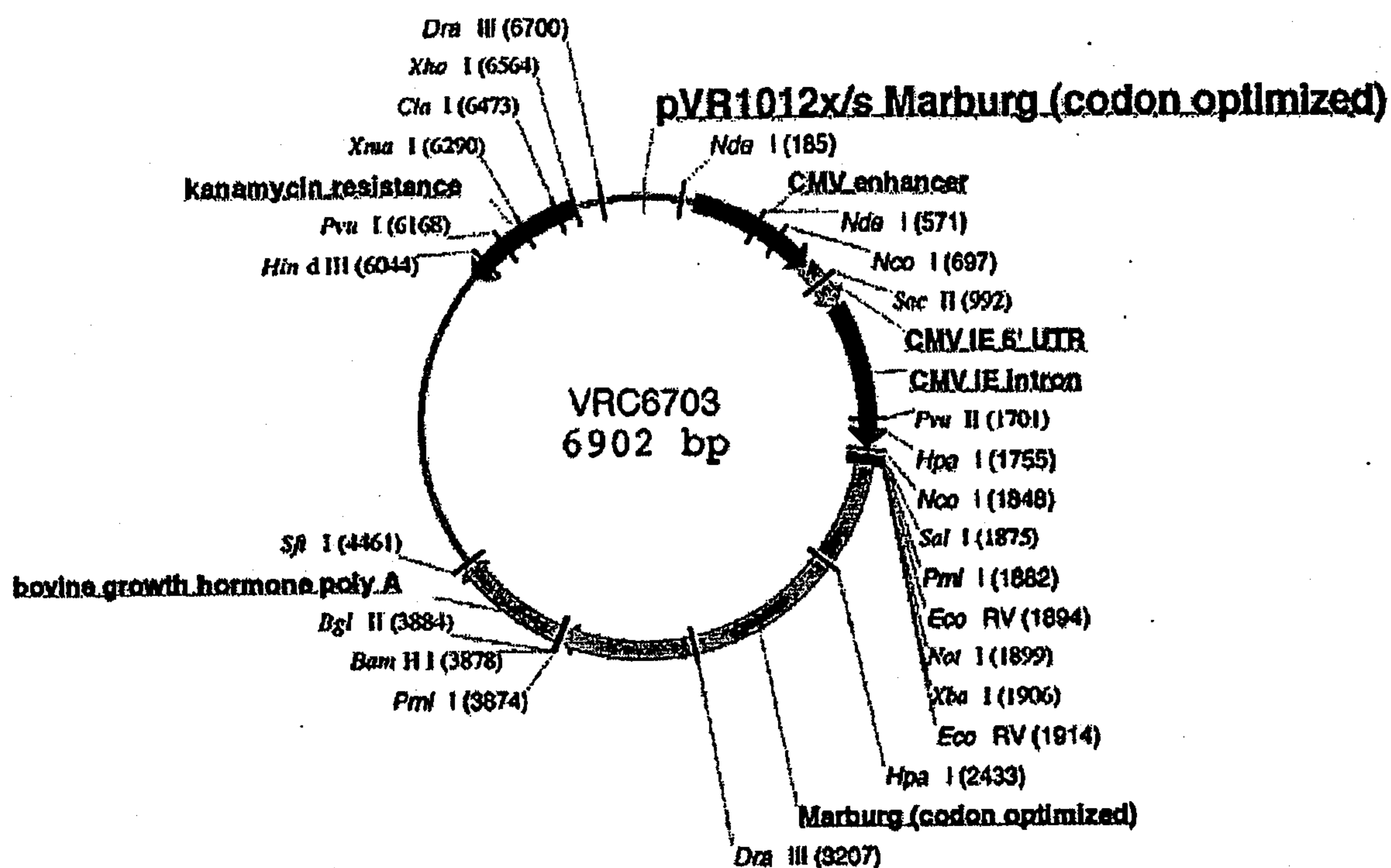


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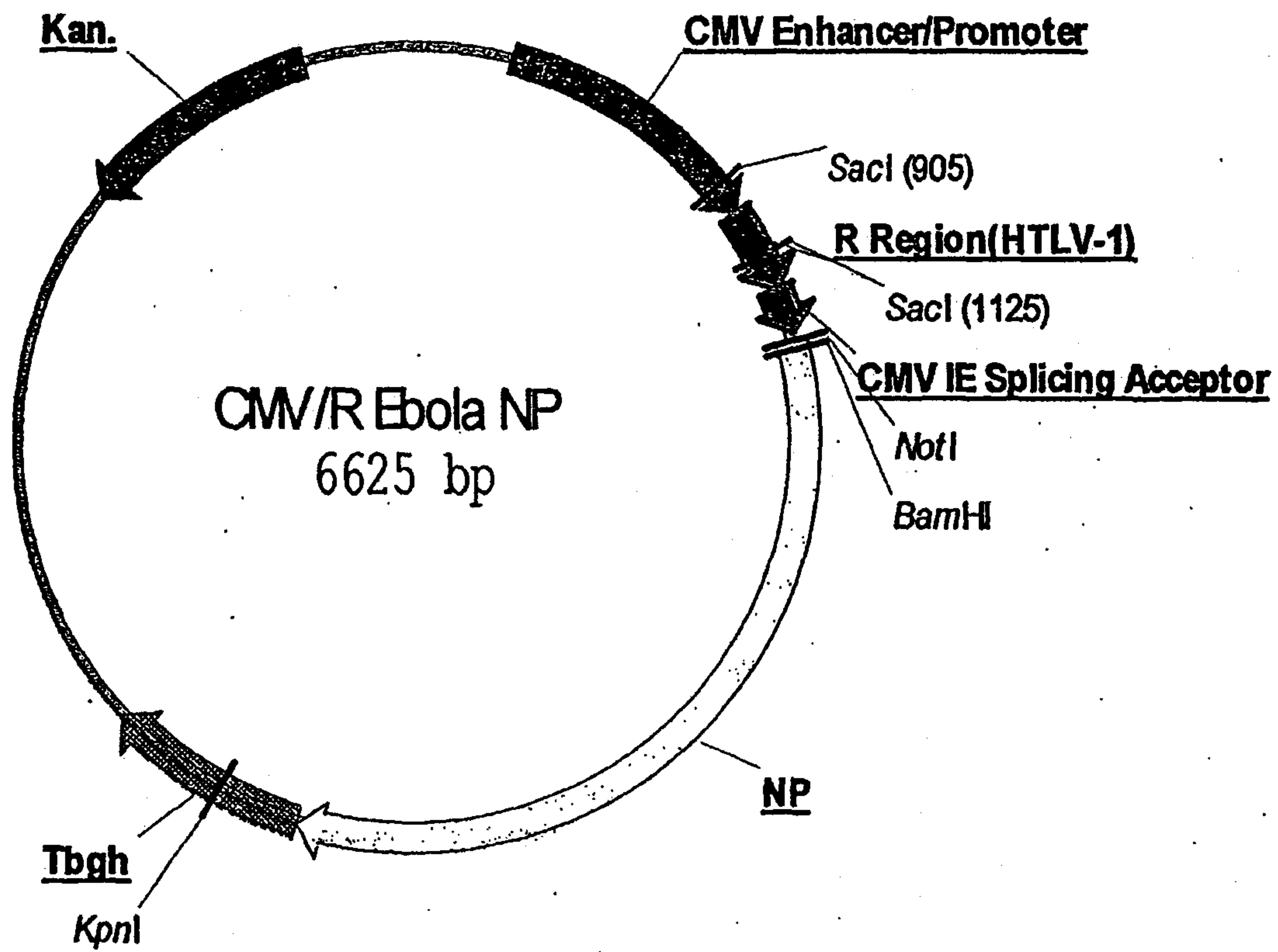


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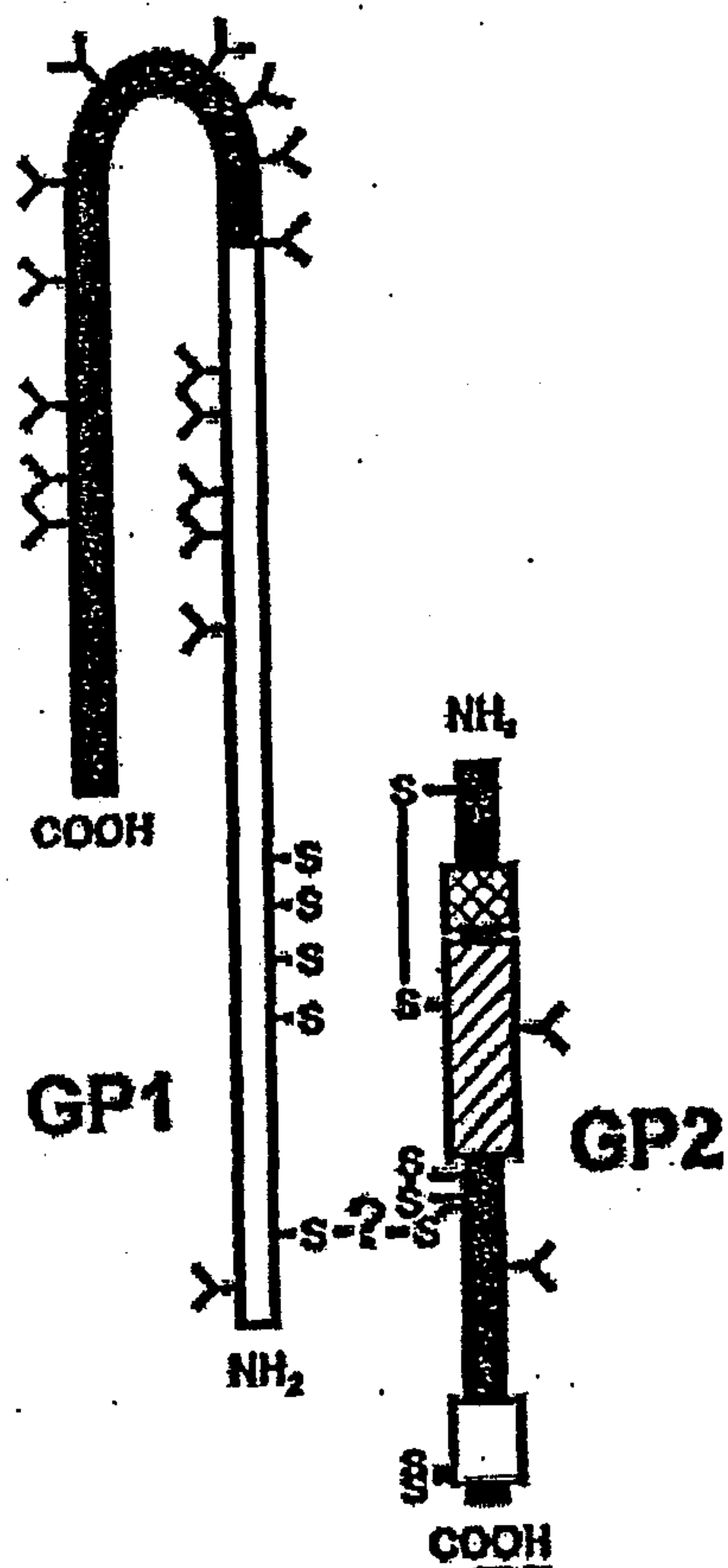


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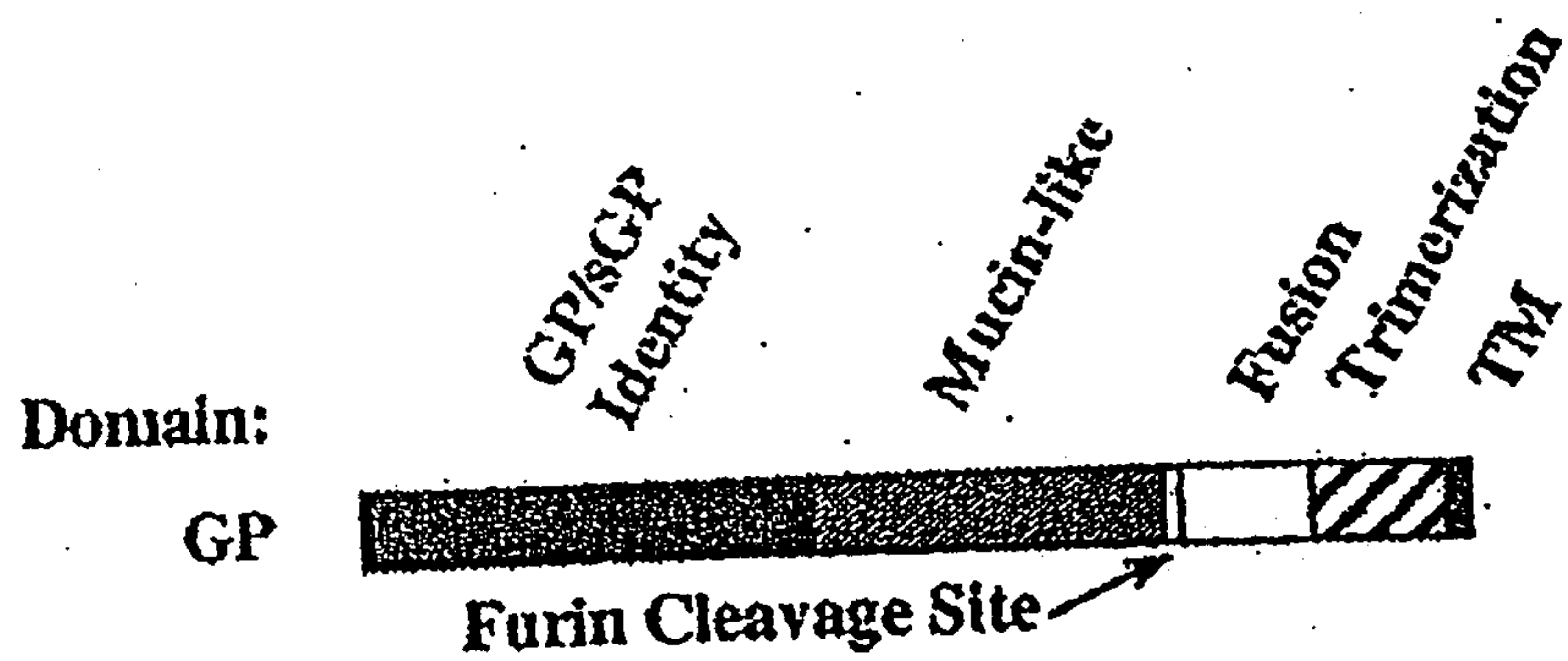


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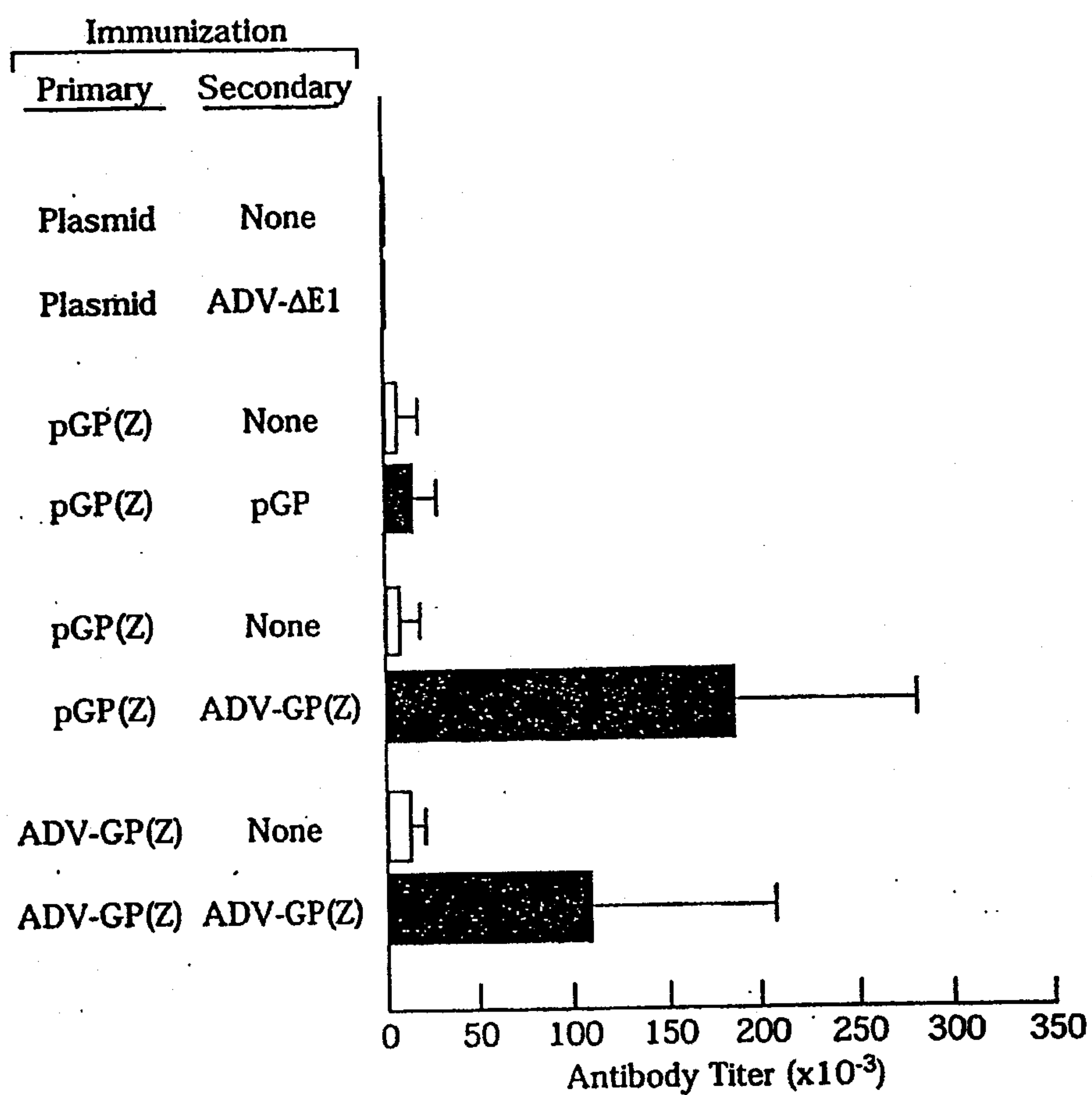


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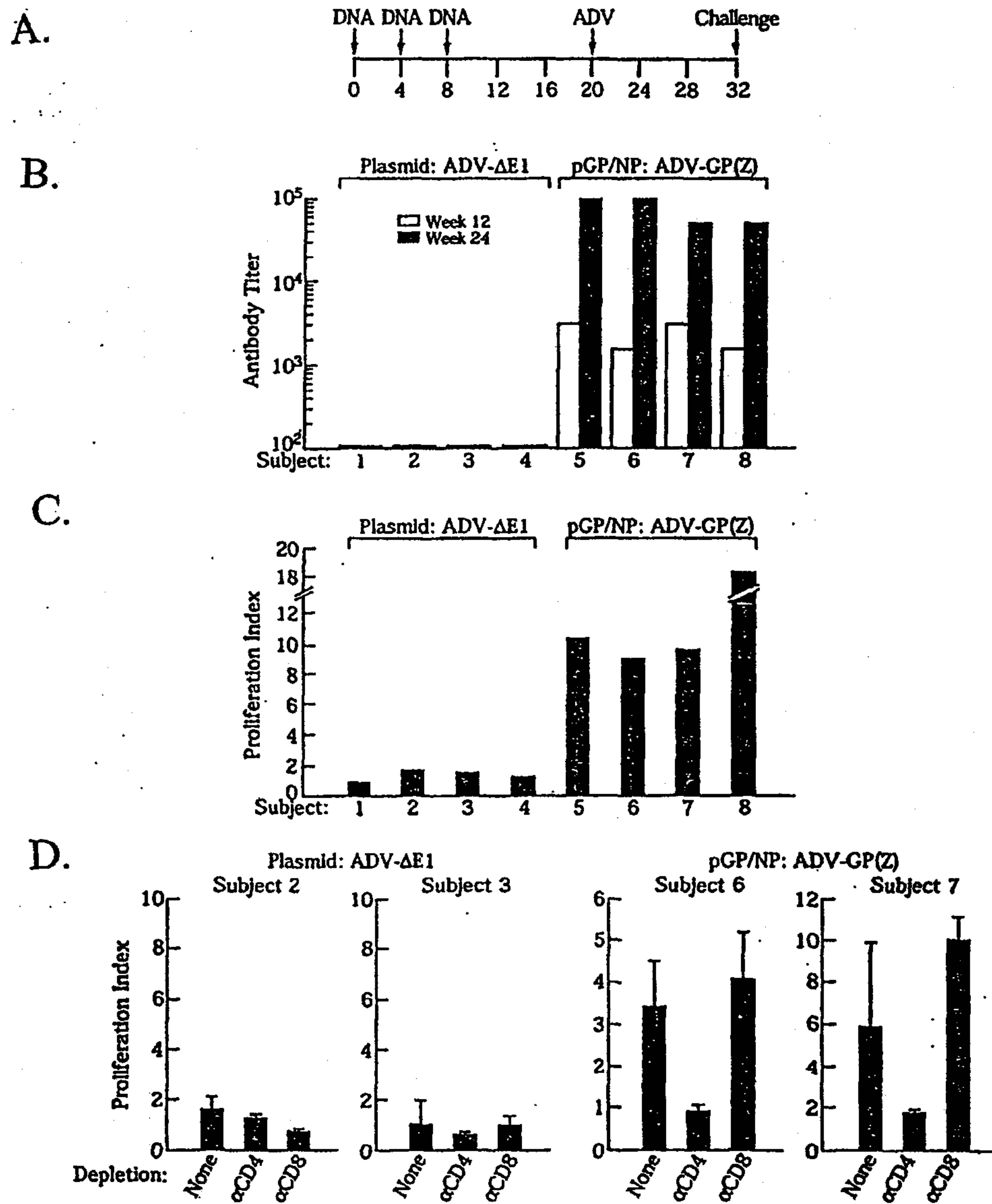


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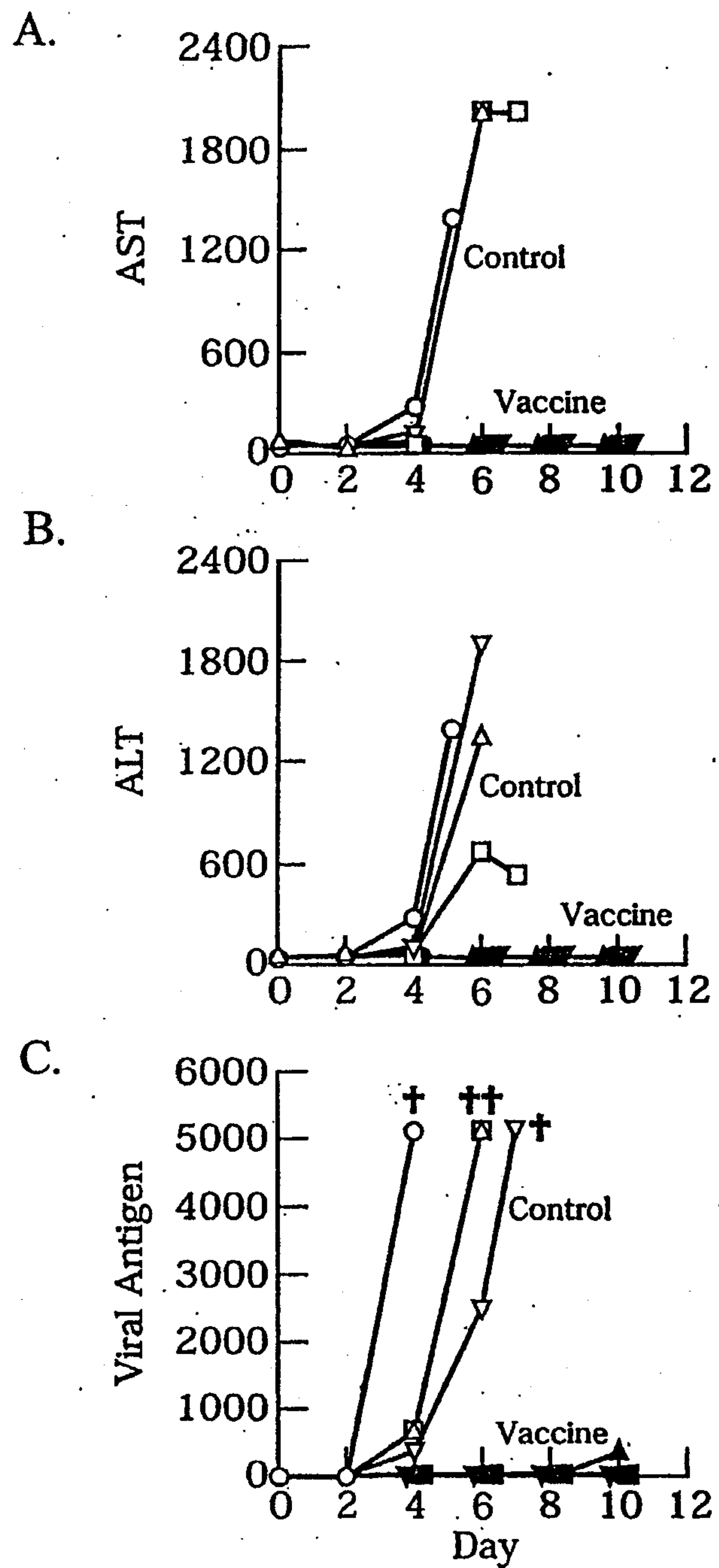


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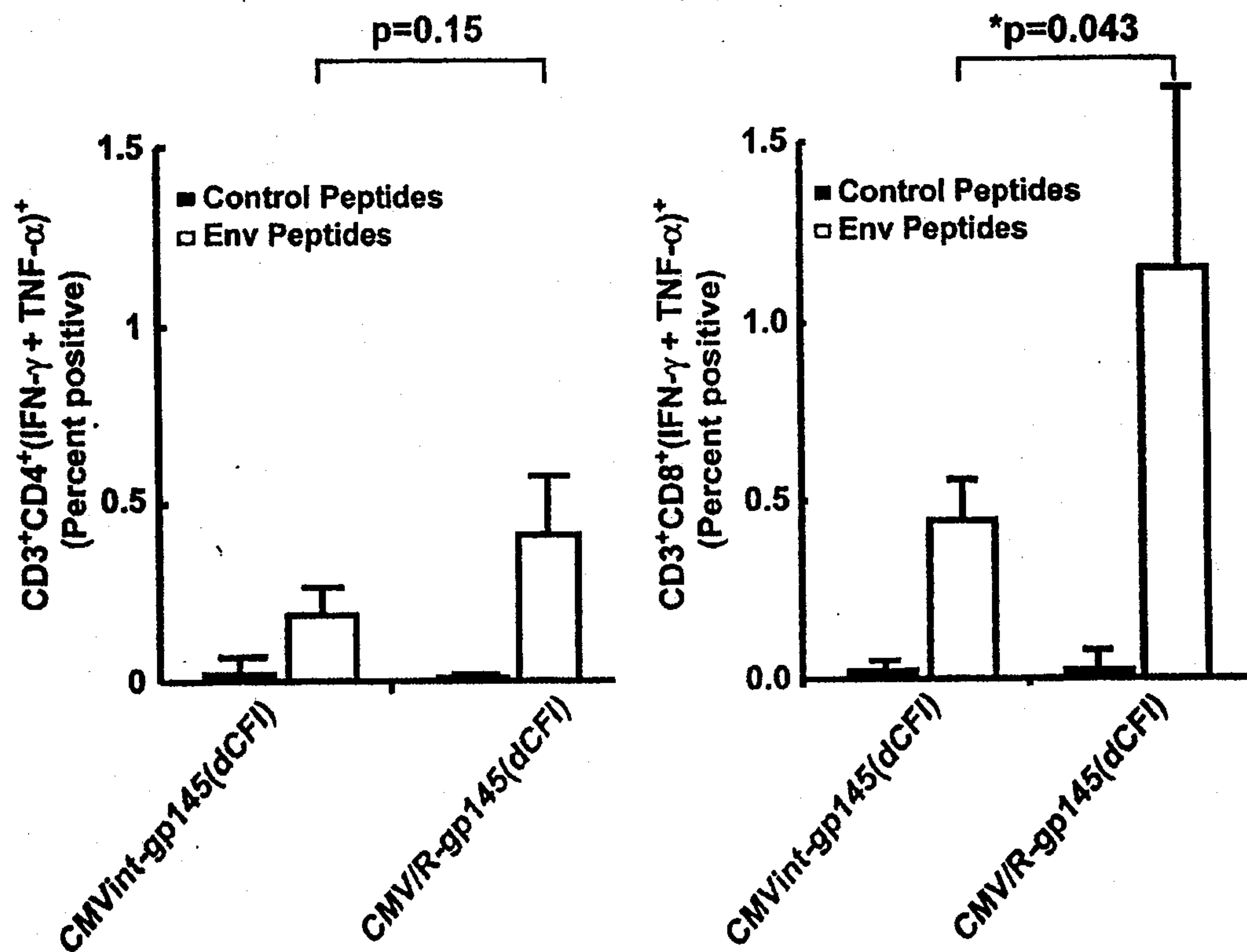


Figure 51

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