

Oregon Veterinary  Medical Association

February 28, 2013

RE: Senate Bill 5502

Joint Natural Resources Subcommittee
Co-chairs Sen. Chris Edwards & Rep. Ben Unger

Dear Co-chairs Edwards and Unger, and Committee Members:

I am here this afternoon on behalf of the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association and in support of the Oregon Department of Agriculture – more specifically, the Animal Health Division.

Our organization and veterinarians across the state work closely with the Animal Health Division. We know first-hand that the Division is essential to the protection of livestock and pet health and welfare in Oregon. And we also acknowledge its important responsibility with the protection of public health – as animal health *and* human health often go hand-in-hand.

The Animal Health Division needs a solid foundation of funding from the State of Oregon. This issue has become even more critical, given the loss of federal support through USDA-APHIS, which places a heavier load of responsibility on a Division that has seen a loss of field veterinarians and support staff as a result of funding cuts in the past two budgetary cycles.


Our concern is that with any further erosion in its budget, the Animal Health Division will be significantly constrained from providing vital services to the State of Oregon. This would result in the State offering substandard service and care to the livestock industry, to the pet owning public, and, in general, to the citizens of Oregon. One example: we cannot lose our disease-free status of livestock in the state; if this were to happen, it would cause a severe hardship on Oregon's livestock producers, and the economic repercussions would be widespread across the state.

This said, we do sincerely appreciate that the Governor's budget includes funding for the Division. Yes, we wish that the State's support was at a higher level. But we also recognize the difficulty and challenge before you and your colleagues in the Oregon Legislature to cobble together and agree upon a workable budget.

While we hope that an increase in funding for the Animal Health Division will occur during better economic times, we are asking for you to – at a minimum – support the current budget allocation. Please do not further reduce what has been presented.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Glenn M. Kolb
Executive Director