



OREGON
VETERINARY
MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION



April 27, 2023

**Joint Committee on Ways & Means Education Subcommittee
Senator Lew Frederick & Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chairs**

RE: HB 5025, Support of State Program Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Lab

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, which is a State Program in HB 5025.

The OVDL is Oregon's One Health laboratory responsible for diagnosing animal diseases across the state, from beloved family pets, agricultural animals that are source of our livelihoods, to Oregon's wildlife.

The OVDL is the only diagnostic laboratory in Oregon accredited by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians and is a member of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network; a collection of laboratories across the country whose mission is dedicated to protecting animal agriculture in the United States.

They are the only laboratory in the state available to respond to ever-evolving threats to sectors of our economy dependent on animals, as well as threats to public health. The OVDL has been on the frontline of testing for highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) for the Oregon Department of Agriculture and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. They've diagnosed HPAI in thousands of domestic and wild birds and, worryingly, increasing numbers of different species of mammals.

COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 pandemic provided Oregon and the United States with a reminder of the threat posed to public health and the economy from zoonotic diseases - infectious diseases transmissible from animals to humans. The pandemic shone a light on the positive impact the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (OVDL) has on protecting animal and human health.

The OVDL stepped up during the pandemic, pivoting to apply their considerable scientific expertise to address the emergency, rapidly developing the capability to contribute to testing for COVID-19. In total, scientists at the laboratory performed more than 300,000 COVID-19 tests for the state of Oregon!

Zoonotic Disease

In 2021, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 4128, which directed the Legislative Policy and Research Office's (LPRO) to develop a report evaluating Oregon's current framework for monitoring, preventing and responding to zoonotic diseases and recommend ways to strengthen the framework. One of the recommendations of the report was to increase resources and capacity at the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

The LRPO Zoonotic Report noted limitations related to the existing facilities and resources. State investments in the OVDL and modernizing the facilities could result in bolstering state partnerships and efforts to address zoonotic diseases in Oregon. In addition to the OVDL's base funding in HB 5025, HB 3247 proposed to make additional investments in the OVDL addressing critical personnel and equipment needs to meet the state's demands to monitor for, prevent and respond to emerging and zoonotic disease in Oregon.

We the undersigned recognize the vital role the OVDL plays in Oregon's animal agriculture, protecting the natural environment, and the health of Oregon's public and the animals in their lives. We therefore strongly urge support of the OVDL.

Sincerely,

Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Oregon Sheep Growers Association
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Oregon Farm Bureau
Oregon Humane Society

Oregon Hunters Association
Northwest Chicken Council
Oregon Veterinary Medical Association
Portland Veterinary Medical Association