



DATE: 03 February 2026

TO: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire: Chair, Senator Jeff Golden; Vice-Chair, Senator Todd Nash; Member, Senator Fred Girod; Member, Senator Floyd Prozanski; and Member, Senator Kathleen Taylor

RE: Opposition to SB 1539

As a retired food animal veterinarian with 38 years of clinical experience, I ask you to oppose SB 1539. It was created with good intentions, but its negatives offset any claimed benefits.

Veterinarians take an oath to protect the health and welfare of our patients. So, we study for years, undergo continuing education obligations, and are regulated at national and state levels, all to protect the public and animals under our care. The lay people under this bill will have nothing like the training, continued education, or regulation and oversight as do veterinarians.

SB 1539 assumes reproductive health work requires no knowledge of the entire animal. This is a dangerous assumption, for without a veterinarian's ability to assess the entire patient, cattle reproductive diagnosis and treatment is a recipe for harming animals and owners. Furthermore, when a cow is diagnosed as having a reproductive problem, treatments are called for. Lay people cannot legally access the needed prescription medications; hence passage of SB 1539 will drive demand for illegal distribution of potentially harmful pharmaceuticals.

A reason many persons support this bill is due to a limited availability of large animal veterinarians. However, removing income avenues for rural veterinarians will eventually lead to a loss of veterinary services to all rural Oregonians, not just cattle owners. Additionally, veterinarians are the front line protecting animal welfare, keeping zoonotic diseases from the public, and for monitoring our herds and flocks for foreign animal diseases. SB 1539 will hinder rural veterinarians' vital public health and agricultural security functions.

Moreover, rural areas also experience limited access to dentists and medical doctors, but nobody advocates allowing slightly trained lay people to perform dentistry and family health care. Why should animal health be treated so differently?

In summary, SB 1539 will push lightly trained and unregulated lay people upon the citizens and animals of Oregon. These persons will be unable to assess the entire animal, opening the stage for actions which would be criminally negligent were a veterinarian to do the same thing. It will also expand illegal demand for controlled medications. Finally, people performing cattle work under SB 1539 will lessen economic incentives for veterinarians, decreasing their availability to all rural Oregonians and animals, and will increase our state's risk of disease outbreaks.

As a result, while I commend the Committee for looking to improve animal care and productivity in Oregon, I do not see this bill doing anything but harming animals and their owners. I ask you to please oppose SB 1539.

Sincerely,

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