

February 4, 2026

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire
Oregon Legislative Assembly

RE: Support for SB 1539

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 1539.

SB 1539 is a commonsense bill that provides a practical solution to a real and ongoing challenge in Oregon's livestock industry. There is a well-documented shortage of large animal veterinarians nationwide, including in Oregon. While additional veterinarians are needed, this bill offers an effective way to bridge that gap by allowing properly trained and certified individuals to perform routine cattle pregnancy verification.

Importantly, SB 1539 is a compromise proposal. It is narrowly focused and does not include highly skilled practices, such as equine dentistry. The bill maintains appropriate safeguards for animal health while improving access to essential livestock services, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Finally, SB 1539 strengthens animal health by directing limited large animal veterinary resources toward more urgent and complex animal health issues, while allowing routine reproductive care to be provided efficiently and safely.

I personally have an additional concern as it relates to the current situation, and the challenges ranchers are facing with such limited access to heifer pregnancy verification. In my job, I help support ranchers as they prepare to send parts of their herd into the food supply chain. While it is not required, many producers choose to verify pregnancy status before shipping cattle off their operation in order to maintain viable, healthy pregnancies within their herd, and to prevent sending pregnant animals into the food supply chain. Because this is an optional practice, if veterinarians are not available for an additional visit to the ranch, which they often are not, then cattle will ship without the pregnancy verification performed. This is resulting in an increased number of pregnant animals being delivered to a feedyard or finishing facility. As you can imagine, a pregnant heifer in the food supply chain is an animal welfare and ethical issue. SB 1539 could provide an effective solution to this very preventable problem.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your support for SB 1539. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Claire Billman