



DATE: 23 February 2026

TO: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water.: Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald, Members Boice, Hartman, Levy, Marsh, McLain, Scharf

RE: Opposition to Senate Bill 1539 A-Engrossed

As a retired food animal veterinarian with 38 years of experience, I ask you to oppose Senate Bill 1539 A-Engrossed. It was created with good intentions, but its negatives offset its claimed benefits.

Veterinarians take an oath to protect the health and welfare of our patients, our clients, and the public's health. 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 A-Engrossed assumes reproductive health work requires no knowledge of the entire animal. However, 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 A-Engrossed will drive demand for illegal distribution of potentially harmful pharmaceuticals.

Many persons support this bill 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 A-Engrossed will hinder rural veterinarians' vital public health and agricultural security functions.

Moreover, rural areas also experience limited access to other health care professionals, such as dentists and medical doctors, but we should not advocate for allowing slightly trained lay people to perform dentistry and family health care. The legal precedent to lower the standards of a health profession, however, lies within this bill.

In summary, SB 1539 A-Engrossed 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 deemed as criminally negligent were a veterinarian to do the same thing
- This bill will expand illegal demand for controlled medications
- Lowering Oregon's health care standards will lessen incentives for rural veterinarians, decreasing their availability to all Oregonians and animals, and will increase our state's risk of disease outbreaks.

As a result, I do not see this bill doing anything but harming animals and their owners. I ask you to please oppose SB 1539 A-Engrossed.

Sincerely,

Barrett D. Slensing
Emeritus, Epidemiology/Production Medicine & Director for Agrosecurity and Biopreparedness
North Carolina State University, College of Veterinary Medicine
Guest Lecturer, Oregon State University, Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine
919 548 3411 slensingbarrett@gmail.com