



February 23, 2026

Senate Bill 1539 A-Engrossed (Oppose)

Dear Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald and Committee Members

Oregon law defines pregnancy evaluation of cattle as the practice of veterinary medicine. And across our state there are more than 100 veterinarians who provide large animal services, including pregnancy checks, to our rural communities. These are valued partnerships.

As you know, this bill allows unlicensed individuals – many with minimal training – to practice veterinary medicine, to perform this veterinary procedure. We don't support this.

We have heard from proponents of this bill that allowing lay individuals to evaluate pregnancy in cattle would free up veterinarians to perform other important livestock services.

- There is nothing much more important than for veterinarians to be on the farm or ranch. And reproductive services are a primary reason that veterinarians visit farms.

In fact, these visits are required by federal and state law to establish the Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship, which is the foundation for the provision of any service, treatment, including prescription medications.

- While checking a cow's pregnancy status, veterinarians in real time can begin to assess concerns with a challenged pregnancy or start to investigate why cows are open (non-pregnant). A lay person cannot diagnose such concerns.
- Removing veterinarians from routine herd reproduction management disrupts the partnership they have with producers. In the long term, producers will find they have fewer options for herd health management, including emergency response and care.

We also have heard from proponents of this bill that it sometimes can take two to three weeks to schedule a veterinarian for preg checking.

- Businesses must make schedules. And, yes, scheduling, at times, can be challenging. This is no different for many of us when we look to schedule an appointment with our physician, our dentist, or our car mechanic.

But producers already have workable alternatives, when scheduling doesn't meet their wishes.

- Producers and their employees may legally evaluate their own cattle for pregnancy, and many do.
- If they don't have this capability, they can use widely available – and reliable – noninvasive blood or milk tests to determine pregnancy status in any area of Oregon where there may be a veterinary shortage. These tests are being used in large and small beef and dairy operations.
- And ranchers with a small number of cows can also organize with other small producers nearby to align their calendars and schedule a veterinarian to preg check the collective herds in the same area on the same day.

This approach has worked in areas of North Carolina for many years and has proven to be economical for producers and veterinarians. And it can be a viable approach here.

SB 1539-A substitutes minimally trained and unlicensed labor for trained and experienced medical professionals. And it will take veterinarians away from farm and ranch visits.

- The further removed veterinarians are from the farm or ranch there will be an increased risk of poorer production, a greater risk to the health and welfare of cattle, the possibility of livestock diseases going undetected and unreported, and elevated concerns for public health, as many livestock diseases can be transmitted to humans.

This bill attempts to isolate pregnancy diagnosis as a simple mechanical procedure. In practice, however:

- Evaluation frequently leads to treatment decisions.
- Abnormal findings require medical interpretation.
- And herd fertility analysis influences pharmaceutical decisions.

This is medicine – and medicine is layered and complex. As is herd management.

Given the complexity of this issue and the potential consequences for herd health, production, and public health, we urge deeper discussions to identify solutions that do not compromise veterinary standards or animal welfare.

Respectfully,

Glenn

Glenn M. Kolb, Executive Director
Oregon Veterinary Medical Association

