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GROWING STRONG

February 23, 2026

House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon Legislative Assembly

RE: Support for SB 1539A

Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SB 1539A, which allows individuals who are properly trained and certified by the State of Oregon to verify if cattle are pregnant. The Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is supportive of this commonsense bill that protects animal health, increases needed access to essential animal health services in underserved areas, maintains strong relationships between veterinarians and livestock producers, is aligned with state economic goals, and positions the livestock industry for herd expansion. In short, this bill represents a meaningful step toward a real solution for our state's cattle producers.

OFB is the state's most inclusive agriculture organization, proudly representing over 6,500 family farms and ranches that produce more than 220 agricultural commodities. From hops and hazelnuts to cattle, cranberries, and timber with operations spanning from just a few acres to thousands, our members utilize all farming methods including organic, conventional, regenerative, biotech, and even no-tech.

Oregon needs more veterinarians. This is especially true for large animal veterinarians in regions of the state that are sparsely populated. According to a 2025 Capital Press article that relied upon industry data from the American Veterinary Medical Association, over the past decade there has been a 22 percent *increase* in companion animal vets but a corresponding 15 percent *decrease* in agricultural practitioners.¹ While this bill would have benefits for cattle producers statewide, it is important to note that cattle ranching operations are typically found where urban pressures are largely reduced or even absent. This presents a unique challenge for an industry that relies on advanced training but is

¹ <https://capitalpress.com/2025/04/17/veterinarian-shortage-frustrates-farmers-but-solutions-arent-simple/>

geographically disparate. According to Oregon State University, “Most of the state’s estimated 11,000 cattle ranches are in southern and eastern Oregon, particularly in Malheur, Morrow, Harney, Klamath, and Lake counties.”² Collectively, these five counties have a population density 3.6 people per square mile. Contrast this with Multnomah County, which boasts 1,712 residents per square mile, or a population concentration more than 47,000% higher than the five counties identified by OSU.

In this context, both Oregon ranchers and animal health providers associated with the livestock industry need all the help they can get. In the most recent count by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Oregon has more than 1.2 million head of cattle.³ Meanwhile, the Oregon Veterinary Medical Examining Board (OVMEB) reports 5,136 licensed veterinarians in the state as of today, February 23, 2026.⁴ That number includes all veterinarians, not just those specializing in large animal care. The data is not easily parsed by geographical location, but a simple examination of OVMEB information suggests a predictably strong correlation between human population centers and licensed veterinarians. In other words, there are very few licensed veterinarians—large animal specialists or otherwise—located in our rural areas where most of our cattle herds are located. This matches anecdotal evidence regularly reported by our members, including those who have testified in support of this bill. Adoption of SB 1539A would encourage the more efficient use of limited resources—our large animal veterinarians—by allowing properly trained and certified animal care professionals to focus on routine livestock reproductive care, thereby encouraging veterinarians to directly target their expertise on more immediate and existential animal health pressures.

Nationally, the cattle herd is the smallest it has been in the last 75 years.⁵ This is not due to lack of consumer demand. One does not need to look or go far to see the current market price of beef and see the impact on consumers’ grocery bills—a review of beef prices today versus those five years ago shows a price increase at least double that of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index. Oregon is not immune from these impacts and the long-term trendlines within the cattle industry that are anticipated as a result. As the market continues to balance out as it seeks to meet increasing consumer demand, the lengthy process of growing the overall herd size will only continue to grow in importance. Not only will this serve as a practical, meaningful benefit to a critical contributor to Oregon’s rural economy that annually generates more than \$900 million, but it is also aligned with Oregon’s economic prosperity goals.

In conclusion, this is a compromise bill that is the product of a strong policy development process and meaningful policy dialogue. We appreciate the hard and pragmatic work that has gone into it within the Oregon Legislature as well as the guidance provided by our

² <https://www.wlj.net/osu-research-outreach-drive-cattle-industry-to-success/>

³ https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/Ag_Overview/stateOverview.php?state=OREGON

⁴ <https://ovmeb.us.thentiacloud.net/webs/ovmeb/register/#> (searched Feb 23, 2026 – active license only)

⁵ <https://www.drovers.com/news/industry/u-s-beef-herd-continues-downward-86-2-million-head>

agency partners. Further, SB 1539A and prior iterations illustrate what is possible when politics are put aside in favor of policy advancements intended to support real needs in our rural communities, and we are proud to be a part of moving the bill to this point and respectfully request your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan J. Krabill', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ryan J. Krabill
Oregon Farm Bureau

The discussion associated with SB 1539A has elevated the conversation about the shortage of licensed veterinarians in the state of Oregon.