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**TESTIMONY –**

**SB 32**

**Senate Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery Committee**

**February 8, 2021**

Chair Golden and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association, representing beef cattle producers around the state, finds itself in a bit of a corner on SB 32.

The Association recognizes the direct and indirect value the brand inspection program provides; the primary purpose being to deny a market for stolen livestock, primarily cattle. The recording of brands and the application of them is essential for our producer's ability to run cattle on vast open lands where they can and often do co-mingle with other producer's cattle.

The inspection process is unique, as it requires very skilled and experienced inspectors to actually get in the corral or enclosure with cattle and sort out ownership by brands and other identifying characteristics. This service is essential to being able to run cattle and be relatively assured that cattle will be returned to the proper owner at the end of the grazing season. Likewise, if cattle get out, cause damage, or create safety issues, ownership can be readily traced.

A secondary benefit, and nearly as valuable when needed, is the data gathered by the program available to animal health officials when there is a disease outbreak, and especially if a foreign animal disease were to show up. The brand program is the cornerstone of the disease response plans in the West.

While we appreciate and respect all values of the program, the Association feels this proposal is too large and broad to fully support. We recognize the value and acknowledge that the program has seen some recent increases in costs outside their control.

OCA supports the idea of raising some fee caps for the brand program. Specifically, we support raising the per head inspection fee cap to \$1.35. We do not support raising brand registration fees, activation fees, or recording fees for this biennium.

In summary, we are not in opposition to additional fees to keep a viable program running, but we feel those increases should come from specific sources rather than a broad approach. We respectfully ask the committee to consider amending the bill to reflect our input.

Thank you for accepting my testimony on behalf of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association concerning SB 32.

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