



Oregon State
University

**Carlson College of Veterinary
Medicine**

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February 2, 2021

**Senate Bill 103
(Support)**

Senate Committee: Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Heard, and Other Committee Members:

During the devastating wildfires this past summer, the Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine (CCVM) was asked for medical help and guidance for the pets and livestock that were evacuated from their homes that were destroyed or in danger of being destroyed. Our faculty, staff, and students were eager to help in the important task of evaluating and providing needed medical care for animals that were evacuated. We sent personnel to sites where animals were being held after evacuation, provided timely information on our web-site, and received financial contributions from Oregonians and others who wished to support our efforts.

There was a great deal of confusion during this time regarding communication and lines of responsibility. The CCVM received calls from animal owners, veterinarians, animal shelters, and state officials who were all prepared to assist in efforts. It was not clear who was making decisions and who had responsibility. A team from the CCVM has joined with the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association, and other interested parties, to develop training materials for veterinary students, veterinarians, and potentially community members to clarify appropriate measures for a coordinated disaster response that affects animals.

We support SB103 as one of the steps that would be helpful in better coordinating this disaster response. The responsibility for livestock and pets would be clarified and simplified with both under the ODA-Animal Health division. The presence of a state-funded and designated Emergency Coordinator within the ODA would be an important component of the success of this bill. This would allow us to continue to work with the State Veterinarian in a productive manner to plan for the care of all types of domestic animals in the event of another disaster-related situation.

The questions we have about this proposed legislation include these:

Would the Office of Emergency Management continue to be the contact for federal and local agencies or would the ODA-Animal Health become the single point of contact for animal-related response? Would counties in Oregon continue to have decision-making authority or would this be transferred to the ODA?

What are the budget implications of this change? The additional responsibility, if assigned to ODA-Animal Health, would require additional funding for personnel.



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The Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine has the expertise and desire to promote and preserve animal health and education of future veterinarians who will continue to ensure it. We look forward to continuing to work with the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association and the state veterinarian. We support SB 103 and would be enthusiastic about participating in a working group to continue to make progress on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Susan J. Tornquist, DVM, MS, PhD, Diplomate ACVP
Lois Bates Acheson Dean