



Oregon State University
Oregon Veterinary
Diagnostic Laboratory

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Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine
134 Magruder Hall
Corvallis, Oregon 97331-8555

P 541-737-3261

F 541-737-6817

<http://vetmed.oregonstate.edu/ovdl>

MEMO

TO: Representative Ken Helm, Chair
House Agriculture, Land Use, Water & Natural Resources Committee

FR: Kurt Williams, Director
Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Lab

DT: January 26, 2023

RE: Testing for Chronic Wasting Disease at the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the HB 2532, which creates a Chronic Wasting Disease testing program at Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife through a partnership with the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (OVDL). I have attached a background document on the OVDL, which is housed at the Oregon State University Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine, for your review.

What is Chronic Wasting Disease?

CWD is a progressive neurologic disease affecting members of the deer family (cervids) caused by an infectious protein known as a prion (pree-on). Deer become infected after exposure to prions released into the environment through urine, saliva or feces from CWD-positive cervids.

How would the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory test for CWD?

Approved testing must be performed on medial retropharyngeal lymph nodes and part of the brainstem (obex). Understanding of anatomy is vital, thus collection should be done by trained technicians.

Two tests are approved for CWD in cervids: ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay) and IHC (immunohistochemistry). Both tests rely on antibodies to detect the presence of CWD prion proteins. The ELISA testing results are reported on an instrument while IHC requires a pathologist to evaluate the results using a microscope.

Developing an Oregon CWD testing program

Currently, samples must be shipped out of state to test for CWD. This creates a delayed response in providing important information to hunters and public health data.

To develop a program in Oregon, the OVDL would need to purchase equipment needed to run the ELISA and IHC tests. Also, since the lab is an accredited lab, OSU would need to acquire the certification for these tests.

The following budget has been developed for the 23-25 biennium to develop and implement a CWD testing program at the OVDL in partnership with ODFW. With this allocation OSU would be able to run 3,000 samples/yr.

Equipment Costs:	\$394,000 (one-time investment)
Staffing:	\$360,000
<u>Supplies:</u>	<u>\$216,640</u>
Total Request:	\$970,640