



March 7, 2023

To: House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resource and Water Committee

Re: Statement IN SUPPORT of HB 3247

Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens and members of the Committee:

Washington County Health and Human Services supports HB 3247

This bill will support a vital program used across the State in the diagnosis, testing, and identification of zoonotic diseases affecting both animals and humans. From routine testing for rabies in animals that have bitten humans to providing services that help monitor for, prevent, and respond to zoonotic disease in Oregon the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (OVDL) is a valuable public health resource. This bill would increase State support for the OVDL and begin the process of building a new laboratory to meet the needs of the 21st century.

As noted in the Executive Summary of a report prepared by the Legislative Policy and Research Office, Zoonotic diseases, also known as zoonoses, are diseases or infections that can spread between animals and humans. Zoonotic diseases have been recognized as being a primary cause of disease and infection in humans and may cause economic and social concerns. Studies have shown that zoonotic diseases with an animal origin have caused ~60 percent of emerging infectious diseases in humans over the past several decades and ~72 percent of these diseases originated in wildlife.

That same summary identified “addressing agency resource needs to allow for additional efforts related to zoonotic diseases” and “investing in the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory” as potential policy opportunities. The full report can be found here: (https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen_engagement/Pages/Publications-Reports.aspx).

Washington County Health and Human Services supports this bill and believes passing it will help ensure access to vital services related to zoonoses and public health.

Please vote to pass House Bill 3247 out of committee.

Respectfully,

Mjere Simantel, MSW
Director, Department of Health and Human Services