

I am writing in SUPPORT of OR HB 2167-the Veterinary Medicine Workforce Development and Disease Detection Bill. This bill allocates \$10 million in funding for the OSU Carson College of Veterinary Medicine Teaching Hospital and \$3.5 million in funding for the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Lab to support protecting public and animal health through disease surveillance, diagnosis, and the training of future veterinarians.

The funds will address the severe chronic shortage of veterinarians in rural Oregon, especially in Douglas, Sherman, Tillamook, Klamath, Crook and Umatilla counties. The chronic shortage of food animal veterinarians is significantly impacting the farmers and ranchers in these areas. Oregon agriculture contributes 13 % to the states GDP.

The Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Lab is an important part of this funding need. They are the first line of detection and surveillance from emerging disease threatening Oregonians. Currently, they are monitoring the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) for a possible jump from wild birds to mammals. The diagnostic lab played a role in the early COVID pandemic by assisting in the diagnostic testing process.

Veterinarians are one of the fastest growing occupations according to the Oregon Employment Department. The need for veterinarians is expected to grow 25 % over the next 10 years. OSU Carson College of Veterinary Medicine is one of 33 accredited veterinary schools in the country. It will be expected to educate the future workforce of veterinarians. Veterinarians need to service the growing number of companion animals, as well as support the food animals for farmers and ranchers. In addition, the College needs to continue to produce the clinical specialist including cardiologists, internists, surgeons, oncologist and anesthesiologists. In addition, Carson College of Veterinary Medicine needs to continue to be on the cutting edge of clinical research in order to advance medicine and surgery.

Finally, it just makes economic sense to support HB 2167. The \$13.5 million request s a great return on investment for the residents of the State of Oregon. Please support this bill.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration:

Dr. Mike Bellinghausen
OSU/WSU DVM Class of 1984