

Submitter: Katy Wallace

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2167

January 23, 2025

Dear Representative Helm and Owens

I'm writing in support of increased funding for Oregon State University College of Veterinary Medicine and the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab. As a veterinarian in Rural Eastern Oregon, I see the critical need for veterinarians in rural America. Our state veterinarian has designated six regions with a chronic shortage of veterinarians. Douglas, Sherman, Tillamook, Klamath, Crook and Umatilla counties which have severe, long-standing shortages of food animal veterinarians to support area farmers and ranchers. These regions are listed with the USDA (<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/vmlrp>). Mind you I would say that every rural county in Oregon needs more veterinarians. Harney county has been included on this list previously due to the need for additional veterinarians, but currently our needs isn't as severe as other counties in Oregon.

Why is it so critical to have veterinarians in rural America? Veterinarians ensure a safe food supply by ensuring proper use of vaccinations and medications supporting farmers and ranchers with herd health management. Veterinarians are critical for county public health as a part of the public health team reporting and diagnosing zoonotic diseases like West Nile Virus and Rabies and monitoring and containing High Path Avian Influenza. Additionally, veterinarians support family farms and rural communities by providing care for the animals involved in food animal production the horses and dogs that are critical to the management of livestock. Quoted on the OSU Progress Site in March 2023 "Families are the backbone of agriculture in Oregon. Over 95% of farms in the state are family owned and operated. Ag, food, and fiber make up much of the driving force of the Oregon economy, supplying more than \$42 billion dollars of revenue and 531,000 jobs." Veterinarians are critical to the sustainability of these family farms, Oregon revenue and Oregon jobs.

The veterinary teaching hospital educates veterinarians in Oregon. It's necessary to have veterinarians that are trained in our region that go out and provide services in Oregon. This provides veterinarians trained in disease unique to our area like Salmon Poisoning. Furthermore, provides veterinarians with connections to other colleagues and specialist in our state allowing for the best care for the animals in Oregon.

The veterinary diagnostic lab (VDL) at OSU is critical to animal and human health in Oregon. The VDL as a good relationship with the state veterinarian's office and the

state public health veterinarian's office and when samples of zoonotic disease, reportable disease and diseases being monitored are confirmed there is good communication so that any actions can be taken. The VDL is critical for educating veterinarians allowing veterinary students to be involved in cases and getting hands on learning from cases all over Oregon.

Personally, as a veterinarian in Eastern Oregon, I have had a job open for an additional veterinarian for years with no applicants. There are simply not enough veterinarians in Oregon to support our rural communities and our agriculture. I can think of 3 other veterinary clinics in rural Oregon that are looking for additional veterinarians, and who have had no applicants. Furthermore, the cost of the veterinary education is so high it is often not affordable for new veterinarians to work in rural America. The veterinary teaching hospital needs to be able to provide quality, applicable education to veterinarians at a reasonable cost. This directly supports the State of Oregon through public health and the health of the animals we rely on for food and companionship.

If I can be of further help, please feel free to reach out vetkaty@hotmail.com or 503-680-9520

Katy Wallace MS DVM
OSU Veterinary class 2006
Sage Country Veterinary Service
Burns OR