

Submitter: Sarah Puerner  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and  
Wildfire  
Measure, Appointment or  
Topic: SB976

February 20, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Support for Senate Bill 976 – Expanding Access to Equine Dentistry

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 976, which would allow trained individuals to perform equine dentistry without requiring a license from the Oregon State Veterinary Medical Examining Board. As a prospective horse owner who has previously owned horses, I recognize the critical importance of accessible and affordable dental care for equines. This bill would ensure that well-trained individuals can continue providing essential care, benefiting both horse owners and the animals themselves.

I personally know an individual who has spent years training in equine dentistry and working under a licensed, practicing veterinarian. This person pursued specialized training in equine dentistry precisely because the primary veterinarian did not have the time to perform routine dental exams and procedures. Their expertise has been invaluable in maintaining the health of many horses, addressing issues such as dental malocclusions, bit seat adjustments, and floating teeth—tasks that can significantly impact a horse's comfort, performance, and overall well-being.

As I consider re-entering horse ownership, I would greatly benefit from having this highly trained professional available to care for my future horses. The current restrictions make it unnecessarily difficult for horse owners to access affordable, high-quality dental services. Veterinarians are often stretched thin, prioritizing emergency cases and complex medical procedures, leaving routine dental work either overlooked or delayed. Senate Bill 976 addresses this gap by allowing skilled equine dental practitioners to operate within the scope of their training, ensuring horses receive timely and effective care.

Opponents of this bill may express concerns about maintaining standards of care, but

it is important to recognize that equine dental practitioners undergo rigorous training and work alongside veterinarians to refine their skills. Allowing these professionals to practice legally will not diminish animal welfare—in fact, it will enhance it by increasing access to essential services.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 976 to ensure that horse owners have the ability to seek care from qualified equine dental specialists. This legislation represents a positive step toward improving animal welfare, reducing the burden on veterinarians, and supporting those who have dedicated their careers to equine health.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your efforts in shaping policies that benefit both Oregon's animal owners and the professionals who serve them.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Puerner