



March 4, 2025

Re: House Bill 3314 - Support

Dear Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice Chair McDonald, and Members of the Committee,

I would like to reiterate (see testimony from Dr. Charles Hurty) the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association's support of House Bill 3314 and the Dash-1 amendment, which appropriates money from the General Fund to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for distribution to Oregon State University for harmful algal bloom mitigation in the Ross Island Lagoon.

Algae, organisms that perform photosynthesis, are normal inhabitants of both marine and freshwater environments. Under certain conditions, including warm water temperatures, slow moving currents and the presence of increased levels of nutrients, algae can reproduce rapidly, or "bloom."

Blooms of Cyanobacteria, historically referred to as blue-green algae, can result in the release of toxins that are harmful to humans, livestock, companion animals and wildlife. Exposure to these toxins can occur by swimming in or drinking contaminated water, eating animals living in contaminated water and even by inhaling contaminated water droplets. Companion animals are particularly susceptible to some of the toxins released during cyanobacterial blooms, with symptoms of exposure including vomiting, weakness, convulsions, and even death.

Cyanobacterial blooms are harmful not only because of the toxins that can be released, but also because they cause an elevation in the pH of affected waters and a decrease in oxygen levels. These conditions greatly impact many species of fish, as well as other wildlife. Furthermore, cyanobacterial blooms are detrimental to the local communities in which the affected bodies of water are located due to the resultant loss of revenue from recreational activities such as boating and fishing.

HB 3314 would provide funds for the collection of data at Ross Island Lagoon, a popular recreational spot in the Portland Metropolitan Area that is frequently impacted by harmful algal blooms. Currently, when a harmful algal bloom is detected in a body of water in the State, the Oregon Health Authority posts warnings to the public about the dangers of the bloom to people and animals and the Department of Environmental Quality works to determine the cause of the bloom and ways in which to reduce its impacts.

In supporting HB 3314, it is the OVMA's hope that the information obtained through the study of the Ross Island Lagoon will be shared and help guide efforts to mitigate the harmful impacts of algal blooms on companion animals, pets and wildlife, as well as people and revenue-producing operations, in other areas of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Lynn

Lynn Healy, DVM / President Elect
Oregon Veterinary Medical Association

