

April 8th, 2025

Dear Shelly Boshart Davis & other state legislators connected to this opportunity,

I recently learned about the amazing work the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (OVDL) does for our state's public health system, especially when it comes to tackling zoonotic diseases like COVID-19 and bird flu.

I'm concerned about the challenges the OVDL is facing right now due to outdated facilities and a lack of state support that's not keeping up with the evolving threats like avian flu and chronic wasting disease.

The OVDL is Oregon's One Health laboratory, meaning it plays a key role in diagnosing animal diseases all over the state—from family pets to agricultural animals that are essential to our livelihoods, and even wildlife. It's the only diagnostic lab in Oregon accredited by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians, and it's part of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, which is a big deal for protecting animal agriculture across the country.

During the pandemic, the OVDL really stepped up, quickly pivoting to use their scientific expertise to help with human COVID-19 testing. In fact, they conducted more than 300,000 COVID-19 tests for Oregonians!

And right now, they're on the frontlines again, this time with the avian flu outbreak, which has major implications for our poultry and dairy industries. They're testing thousands of samples both for Oregon and across the nation.

I hope you'll recognize just how important the OVDL is in safeguarding Oregon's animal agriculture, our wildlife, and the health of both the public and the animals we love. I urge you to support their vital work in protecting Oregon from emerging diseases like zoonotics and chronic wasting disease.

I've begun working at Oregon State as the Wellbeing Coordinator/Counselor for the Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine. It's amazing the work that the OVDL does. I receive emails from them equipping me with information that helps me personally and helps the community around us. Please support the appropriation of moneys from the general fund to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for this cause.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,
Sarah Kate Griffin, MS, Professional Counseling Associate
Albany, Oregon