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Dear committee members,

I would like to offer my full support of SB 5525 to provide much-needed funding to the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (OVDL) to strengthen their ongoing efforts at the surveillance, prevention, and response to zoonotic diseases in Oregon.

As the lead responder to marine mammal stranding events along the Oregon coast, I have come to depend upon the expertise and resources of the OVDL on a multitude of cases over the last 19 years involving the post-mortem analysis of hundreds of whales, dolphins, porpoises, seals, and sea lions, many of which succumbed to zoonotic diseases. The services they provide are invaluable, but the resources they currently have are limited and in need of advancements to address the challenges of addressing the developing wildlife disease threats of the 21st century.

I strongly urge you to fully fund SB 5525.

Sincerely yours,

Jim Rice
Stranding Program Manager
Principal Investigator, Oregon Marine Mammal Stranding Network