



April 17, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education

RE: Senate Bill 5525 / Support - Funding

Dear Co-Chair Sollman, Co-Chair Ruiz, and Committee Members:

Senate Bill 5525 appropriates money from the General Fund to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (OVDL) at Oregon State University. For the 2025-2027 biennium the request is for \$3.5 million to cover inflationary costs and support continued services at the laboratory.

The Oregon Veterinary Medical Association supports this critical funding for OVDL as it bolsters the laboratory's diagnostic and surveillance efforts for zoonotic diseases in the state and ongoing development of testing for chronic wasting disease.

The OVDL is the only accredited veterinary laboratory in the state and is a frontline defense in protecting Oregon's public health, agricultural economy, and wildlife from emerging and zoonotic diseases. Its role in disease surveillance, food safety, and outbreak response is critical—not only for animal health but also for preventing the spread of illnesses that can impact humans. As an example, during the COVID-19 pandemic the OVDL demonstrated its essential value by rapidly adapting to support statewide testing efforts, showcasing its capacity to respond to public health crises. Scientists at the laboratory performed more than 300,000 COVID-19 tests for citizens across Oregon.

Now, the OVDL is collaborating with the Oregon Department of Agriculture on the avian flu outbreak and has tested thousands of samples for Oregon (and the nation). This service is critical for our poultry and dairy industries.

The OVDL is uniquely positioned to address diseases of concern to Oregon's animals, the public, and environment. But the laboratory is challenged with chronic insufficient funding and a dated facility. The OVMA urges your support of \$3.7 million in funding to help protect our state's animal agriculture, our natural environment, and the health of Oregon's public.

Sincerely,

Glenn

Glenn M. Kolb
Executive Director

