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Senate Committee on Commerce and General Government

Dear Chair Meek, Vice Chair Drazen and members of the committee:

My name is Diana Wirth—I am the Oregon Cattlemen's Association President. On behalf of our members and the ranching industry which contributes nearly \$1.2 billion dollars in cash receipts to Oregon's economy each year, **I am writing in support of Senate Bill 1577**. Clear and accurate labeling of cell-cultured products is essential for consumer protection, transparency, and fairness in the marketplace.

### **Why Labeling Matters**

1. **Consumer Awareness:** Consumers deserve to know what they are purchasing. Clear labeling provides essential information and allows individuals to make informed decisions about the foods they feed their families.
2. **Safety Assurance:** Accurate labels ensure that consumers are aware of potential allergens and can trust that the product meets established safety standards. This is especially important with emerging technologies where production methods differ significantly from traditional agriculture.
3. **Federal Labeling Standards Already Exist:** The FDA and USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) have jointly developed principles for labeling products made using cell-culture technology. Senate Bill 1577 aligns with these federal guidelines by ensuring consistency, clarity, and transparency.
4. **Consumer Confidence and Market Integrity:** Clear labeling helps consumers distinguish between cell-cultured products and conventionally produced meat. This transparency builds trust in the food supply and prevents confusion in the marketplace. A recent National industry survey found that 74% of consumers want a definitive indication of whether the meat they are purchasing is lab-grown or traditionally produced. Consumers overwhelmingly support clarity and this bill delivers it.
5. **This Matters for Oregon Agriculture:** Cell-cultured meat is produced through a multi-step laboratory process involving cell extraction, controlled growth in bioreactors, differentiation of either muscle or fat cells, and formation into a food product. This process is fundamentally different from raising livestock, and consumers have the right to know which production method they are supporting.

**Why is Senate Bill 1577 Is Needed Now?**

As commercialization of cell-cultured meat expands, traditional livestock producers face potential market disruptions. Without clear labeling standards, these products could be marketed as conventional meat. That could mislead consumers, undermine decades of stewardship, investment, and brand integrity built by ranchers.

**We must advocate for clear and transparent food labeling that protects consumers and ensures fair competition.**

- Cell-cultured products are already entering the U.S. marketplace.
- Technology is advancing faster than public understanding.
- Oregon's livestock producers deserve a level playing field.
- Transparent labeling protects both public trust and food integrity.

This bill does not restrict innovation. It simply ensures that new technologies enter the marketplace honestly and responsibly.

In closing, Senate Bill 1577 supports consumer choice, strengthens transparency, and protects the integrity of Oregon's agricultural economy. Clear labeling is not only reasonable – it's necessary.

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association respectfully urges your support. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Wirth, Oregon Cattlemen's Association President