



TINA KOTEK
GOVERNOR

March 25, 2026

The Honorable Tobias Read
Secretary of State
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Senate Bill 1539

Dear Secretary Read,

Today, I am signing Senate Bill 1539 into law, which allows an individual to verify whether cattle are pregnant without holding a valid license issued by the Oregon State Veterinary Medical Examining Board under certain circumstances, and which sunsets on January 1, 2031.

Oregon's livestock producers support our communities, strengthen our rural economy, sustain local food systems, and are recognized stewards of our working lands. They deserve practical, workable solutions to manage their herds effectively and affordably, particularly given the shortage of large animal veterinary services. At the same time, licensed veterinarians provide indispensable medical expertise that protects animal welfare, public health, and our state's biosecurity. This legislation is incomplete but a step in the right direction to balance these essential needs.

In 2025, I vetoed similar legislation (Senate Bill 976) because it lacked necessary regulatory oversight, risking animal welfare and allowing potential livestock diseases to go unreported. Senate Bill 1539 improves upon prior efforts by placing the authority to define the parameters of pregnancy verification with the Oregon Veterinary Medical Examining Board (OVMEB). This is a good step toward a viable approach that was lacking in SB 976.

To help ensure key regulatory provisions are implemented, I am providing explicit policy direction to the OVMEB regarding the executive implementation of this Act:

The OVMEB must conduct rulemaking in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act (ORS Chapter 183) and consult with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) regarding biosecurity and disease reporting. Furthermore, during their rulemaking the Board should ensure balanced representation including large animal veterinarians and livestock producers. Both interests need to have a clear, active voice in shaping these rules.

The Honorable Read
March 25, 2026
Page 2

Rules adopted by the Board need to both recognize the practical competency and lived experience that agricultural workers already possess, while establishing clear educational and verification requirements to ensure mechanical proficiency and biosecurity awareness. Pregnancy verification by a certified layperson must be viewed as a narrow, supplemental tool for rural producers, not a replacement for comprehensive herd management under a valid Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR). In doing so, the Board should look to the established Certified Euthanasia Technicians as a model.

Because this legislation contains a sunset provision, I view this initial implementation as a pilot program. I expect the engaged parties to return to the Legislature prior to the sunset date with a statutory proposal that brings forward a lasting resolution.

I appreciate the Legislature's continued focus on supporting rural Oregon. A collaborative, certification-based rulemaking process will provide immediate relief to livestock producers while preserving the essential safeguards that protect Oregon's agriculture and the integrity of the veterinary profession.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tina Kotek", with a stylized, flowing script.

Governor Tina Kotek