

To the members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Dr. Travis Kuhlka, from District 36. I have been serving North Dakota as a beef cattle veterinarian for 18 years and am writing in OPPOSITION to HB 1458. I operate one of the few beef cattle only practices in the state focusing on herd health, and this bill is very alarming with broader implications than I believe was intended when introduced. I am also the market veterinarian for one of the largest livestock auction markets in the state which is in Dickinson, ND.

This bill as written will place extreme burden on the cattle industry as well as poultry, swine, and any other that utilizes modified live vaccines for animal health.

To add perspective, most beef calves raised across the state are given modified live respiratory vaccines to prevent Bovine Respiratory Disease Complex (BRDC). This portion of herd health is critical in preparing calves for the challenges faced when weaned from their dams, moved to an auction market, then moved to a feeding facility during the fall and winter months. This is critical in animal health as BRDC is the most common medical condition faced in the feedlot. I think we can all agree that preventing disease and improving animal health and handling is paramount in agriculture.

Almost always there are multiple people present when processing cattle and administering these vaccines, this bill would require an impractical level of oversight with written consents from those present, and I ask what agency would monitor this? The restrictions of this bill would slow the process of using these products thereby harming animal health.

It is also worth knowing that in the face of a major disease outbreak within a segment of animal agriculture modified live vaccines are commonly used to slow or stop the spread of the pathogen. A real-world example was the moderate anthrax outbreak that occurred in 2023 in Grant and Hettinger Counties, where a very efficacious modified live vaccine was used to stop the spread of the pathogen. This bill would drastically impede the ability and response time of livestock professionals to combat such events and prevent economic damage to producers and the industry.

The vaccine types listed in this bill are already widely utilized by animal agriculture and are highly tested, monitored, and licensed by the USDA. They are also regulated by the North Dakota Board of Animal Health. Local businesses that choose to sell modified live vaccines are required to have passed a test and their facilities are inspected by the state to ensure proper dispensing and handling of such vaccines.

I recommend a DO NOT PASS to this bill. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Travis Kuhlka

TK Veterinary Service

Glen Ullin, ND 58631

tckuhlka@gmail.com

701-400-2953