



Dick Mason/The Observer, File

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State, lab partnering to boost testing for chronic wasting disease in deer

The Observer

CORVALLIS — Faster and more widespread testing for chronic wasting disease in deer is now possible due to a new partnership between the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at Oregon State University's Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Chronic wasting disease is spread through animals' waste and saliva, and infected animals can be contagious for months or years before showing symptoms. It is incurable and affects members of the cervidae family — deer, elk and moose.

The disease has not been detected in Oregon yet, but it has been found in deer just a few miles east of the border in Idaho, so Oregon wildlife officials say it's only a matter of time and they want hunters to be aware.

To prepare for the disease's arrival, the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory received a one-year grant to enable testing for chronic wasting disease in Oregon, rather than sending samples out of state to other national animal laboratories, which officials say can lead to long wait times.

Currently, the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory does not have the capacity to test for prions, the infectious proteins that cause the disease by altering the way proteins are folded in cells within the animal's central nervous system.

"We're going to have to acquire the equipment and the expertise to test for these prions. It's going to be a challenge for us, but that's what we're here for," said Kurt Williams, director of the laboratory

at OSU. "I think it's super important for the state of Oregon and all of us interested in the outdoors. For both hunters and non-hunters — this is something we ought to be doing here in Oregon."

There is no evidence that the disease affects humans or spreads to livestock, Williams said, so at this point, the concern is for the health of the deer, elk and moose populations in the state. Chronic wasting disease is a "spongiform encephalopathic" disease, akin to mad cow in cattle and Creutzfeldt-Jakob in humans, named for the holes it causes within an animal's brain. It is uniformly fatal and there is no vaccine. Infected animals lose their ability to eat and find proper nutrition, so they gradually waste away.

Most of the grant is focused on fieldwork, which includes testing more deceased animals, as well as outreach and education among hunters in the state, said Colin Gillin, state wildlife veterinarian with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Trained biologists will collect samples of lymph nodes and brain stem, where prions are located in infected animals.

As soon as the first case is detected in Oregon, Gillin said the state will likely hold an emergency hunting season within a defined area around where the infected animal was found to reduce the number of infected animals and limit the spread of the disease.

"We'll remove a statistically significant number of animals that are susceptible so we can get a high enough sample size to figure out the real percentage of animals that have the disease," Gillin said. "The goal is to reduce the density such that the nose-to-nose contact of deer in that area will be a lot less."

'People are mad': Portland votes on voting to overhaul city hall

BY CLAIRE RUSH

Associated Press/Report for America

PORTLAND — Portland's official slogan is "The City That Works," but after a tumultuous few years, many residents feel the city is anything but that.

Homelessness and gun violence are surging and parts of downtown are struggling, unable to recover from the coronavirus pandemic and the racial justice protests that gripped the city in 2020.

Now voters are deciding on a ballot measure that would completely overhaul City Hall. The proposal would scrap a century-old commission form of government that Portland is the last major U.S. city to use, and also implement a rare form of ranked choice voting.

The campaigns on these questions have been emotional, reflecting different visions of Portland's future: one that maintains the city's reputation as a testing ground for unique ideas and upholds its unofficial slogan, "Keep Portland Weird," and another that sets unconventional methodology aside in a quest for stability.

Portland is known for its progressive politics. But many residents now think it's on the wrong track, thrusting matters of municipal bureaucracy into the political spotlight as outside funding pours in.

Pollster John Horvick has observed the shift in the hundreds of voter focus groups he's conducted over the last 15 years.

"In 2007, 66% of Portlanders on average that year thought the city was headed in the right direction. Now, it's about 10%," said Horvick, senior vice president of DHM Research. "People are really upset with the way that the city is going."

Reforming Portland's charter has been on the ballot before, but has always failed. Under city law, a 20-person commission must convene every 10 years to review it.

The most recent charter review process kicked off in



Mark Graves/The Oregonian, File

Thousands of Portland high schoolers skipped class and marched into downtown to Portland City Hall Sept. 24, 2021, as part of a global climate strike.

2020, as protests over the police killing of George Floyd erupted nightly on Portland's streets and a nationwide reckoning with racism prompted conversations about making government more accountable and equitable. The charter commission held public meetings and contracted with a local group, the Coalition of Communities of Color, for 18 months of listening sessions.

The result is Measure 26-228, which would get rid of the unique commission form of government, under which city council members act as administrators of the city's various bureaus, and replace it with the more common mayor-council system. It would expand the City Council to 12 members, with four multi-member districts each represented by three councilors, and add a professional city administrator. And it would implement a form of ranked choice voting known as single transferable vote.

The changes were intended to make City Hall more inclusive, but no other U.S. city uses this specific voting system for multi-member districts in city council elections — a point opponents have seized on.

"Portland really has a history with experimenting," he said. "Now, it seems like people are intent on experimenting with democracy itself."

Under the single transferable vote system, ballots are counted in rounds with city council candidates only needing 25% of the vote to win. If a candidate exceeds that threshold, their surplus votes are transferred to the next candidate ranked on each voter's ballot. If no candidate receives 25% in the first round, the one with the fewest votes is eliminated and their votes are transferred to the next preferred candidate on each voter's ballot.

Supporters of the measure have been pointing to a public radio video to help explain the process, which would run the rounds instantly using elections software. They say it could boost voter turnout and make government more representative.

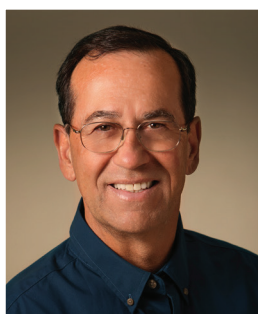
The measure has been endorsed by local chapters of the NAACP and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Portland United for Change, the political action committee working to pass the measure, has received tens of thousands of dollars in contributions from national groups that advocate for ranked choice voting, such as FairVote and Unite America.

Critics have denounced the outside spending and claim the measure is too complex at a time when many voters are questioning the integrity of America's electoral systems.

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My family has called Baker County home since 1935. We are enjoying raising our young daughter in this beautiful community surrounded by small town values.

I promise to work hard for all citizens, do the work that needs to be done and to provide the vital services taxpayer deserve.

I want to be your Baker County Commission Chair to mend the relationship between Baker County and Baker City and other small cities and jurisdictions.



I pledge to:

- Work hard to to maximize fire and ambulance service throughout Baker County
- Continue to support local law enforcement agencies to reduce crime and hold offenders accountable for their actions
- Be a strong supporter for water issues and other matters facing our local agricultural producers
- Work to protect jobs at Ashgrove Cement and other mining entities
- Continue to work with all local entities (Chambers, Baker City Downtown, Interpretive Center, local Museums, Economic Development Committee, etc.) to provide resources to enhance our local tourism industry.
- Advocate and work with State and Federal agencies to provide affordable workforce housing in our community.
- Work hard to bring traded sector jobs to our County that provide family wage jobs for working families.
- Work with local entities to make sure that we have affordable day care for families with working parents

I am not beholden to any special interest groups and will bring honest and open communication to the County Commission. Please vote for Shane Alderson for Baker County Commission Chair.

Paid for by Committee to elect Shane Alderson