Benefit to Texans

- Build an infrastructure to ensure that the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) can continue to serve the agricultural, companion animal, and public health sectors by:
  - Maintaining our status as an American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) accredited laboratory
  - Providing state-of-the-art, rapid, and affordable testing services that support international, interstate, and intrastate movement of animals and animal products
  - Ensuring the health of the animal and public health sectors in Texas and beyond

- Act as the backbone of a Texas agricultural, companion animal, and public health biosurveillance program

- Propel TVMDL and The Texas A&M University System to a leadership role in agriculture and companion animal diagnostics

Description and Justification

A high-consequence disease outbreak could result in economic losses of billions of dollars and trade restrictions that could halt exports of Texas agricultural products. The risk of a high-consequence agricultural, emerging, and/or zoonotic disease in Texas and the nation is at an all-time high for a variety of reasons.
As of 12 core laboratories in the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, TVMDL is one of the highest-volume veterinary laboratories in the nation, averaging more than 200,000 cases each year. Routine testing serves as the backbone of a state, national, and global surveillance system, and supports animal health as well as trade, exports, and the economic structure of agriculture in Texas.

The College Station laboratory, built in 1967 and expanded three times, has served the agency well. However, the antiquated infrastructure jeopardizes biosafety and biosecurity within the laboratory as well as the agency’s likelihood of obtaining accreditation from AAVLD during the next audit cycle. The AAVLD’s fall 2011 audit report specifically outlined the need for a new College Station facility by noting, “The laboratory in College Station is very outdated and rapidly approaching the end of its useful lifespan.” The report also listed several inadequacies, stating: “The laboratory cannot meet current workplace safety requirements, pathogen containment, and workflow efficiency.” The AAVLD auditing body recommended “serious strategic planning to replace this aged structure in College Station.” Issues with the current facility include, but are not limited to, heating, ventilation, and proper air flow (HVAC); plumbing; contamination of porous surfaces; and lack of isolation areas.

A new facility capable of meeting safety and workflow requirements will ensure TVMDL
- can continue to operate in support of the livestock, companion animal, and public health industries
- remains on the cutting edge of veterinary diagnostics and can advance diagnostic research
- is equipped with the latest technology to enhance diagnostic capabilities for animal owners and veterinarians throughout Texas

The facility will be built with flexibility to allow for growth and change with emerging technologies and include space for education and collaboration, which will allow TVMDL to train the next generation of veterinary diagnosticians. This exceptional item will leverage the planned construction of a new animal biocontainment facility at Texas A&M University. Funding for this exceptional item will be used to make payments on a 30-year construction note for a new facility, taking advantage of current low interest rates.

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About Texas A&M AgriLife

What is AgriLife? It’s a simple word for a diverse organization. With teaching, research, extension education, laboratory, and forestry facilities throughout Texas, we serve people of all ages and backgrounds. Led by Vice Chancellor Dr. Mark A. Hussey, Texas A&M AgriLife includes the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Texas A&M Forest Service, and the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory.