

**House Bill 2888
Support**

Dear Chair Barker, Vice Chairs Olson and Williamson, and Committee Members:

I am here this afternoon on behalf of the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association in support of House Bill 2888.

This legislation maintains the broad exemptions under Oregon's current offenses against animals. Owners who provide their pets with appropriate veterinary care and who afford good animal husbandry for their livestock are not affected. This bill also does not expand the scope of our animal cruelty laws. But House Bill 2888 is good for the welfare of animals in our state.

In January 2013 the Marion County Sheriff's Office, with assistance from the Oregon Humane Society, took action against an animal rescue group in the Willamette Valley and released 149 dogs from pretty horrific conditions – neglected dogs that were crammed into kennels, with many of them stacked on top of another, animals that were without water and who were also severely malnourished.

A series of complaints had been lodged against this particular rescue, yet no action was taken until that day in January. In the meantime, the dogs continued to endure deplorable conditions, without food, without water, lying in their own waste.

But this isn't just about dogs or cats that aren't properly cared for – animals that live in overcrowded housing and where conditions are far beyond an individual or rescue group's ability to ensure reasonable and prudent care to preserve an animal's health and well being.

In the past few years authorities have intervened across Oregon to rescue horses that were confined in equally unsanitary and despicable conditions – horses so weak from starvation that they could barely walk, horses riddled with parasites, horses mired in mud or their own feces or both, and animals with festering and open wounds. This kind of care and treatment of animals is unacceptable.

Oregon Veterinary  Medical Association

Here is where House Bill 2888 can help and why our Association supports this legislation.

House Bill 2888 gives the authorities – with judicial order – the ability to intervene more quickly to help remove animals in dire need of care – to abate the nuisance. As far as we understand current law, the owner of the animals is afforded due process – and action cannot be taken if the owner is working with the authorities to remedy the situation or pledges to address the concerns of improper animal husbandry. But if an animal owner continues to neglect or willfully ignores his responsibility for and accountability to the animal, then it is important that the authorities have the ability to intervene.

Oregon has a national reputation for having sound animal welfare laws – among the best in the country. We believe that House Bill 2888 makes them even better. And we ask for your support.

Thank you for your consideration.

Glenn

Glenn M. Kolb
Executive Director