



**Date:** May 7, 2015

**To:** **House Committee on Judiciary**  
Representative Jeff Barker, Chair  
Representative Andy Olson, Vice-Chair  
Representative Jennifer Williamson, Vice-Chair

**From:** Sharon Harmon  
Executive Director, Oregon Humane Society

**Re:** **Senate Bill 004**

Established in 1868, the Oregon Humane Society is the state's largest and oldest animal welfare organization with over 50,000 supporters statewide. We are not affiliated with any local or national organization. **We are here today to ask for your support of SB 004.**

As animal shelters across the country look for ways to reduce pet overpopulation and find homes for adoptable animals, more and more agencies turn to independent rescue groups to provide an alternative to euthanasia of an otherwise happy and social dog or puppy. Many municipal animal control agencies are overcrowded, filled to bursting with more dogs than they can find homes for, and are happy to release dogs to rescue groups willing to take on the burden of care and rehoming. Over the past ten years, municipal shelters and private rescue groups have developed robust transfer programs, providing an alternative to euthanasia and giving countless dogs and puppies a second chance to find a forever home.

While the idea of removing unwanted dogs and puppies from shelters where they have little hope of escaping euthanasia and into the arms of caring and dedicated rescuers may seem like the classic "happy ever after" story, not all of these rescued animals find themselves so lucky. Like children and the elderly, homeless animals are a vulnerable population and as such are at risk of exploitation by individuals posing as animal rescue groups determined to turn a profit from adoption fees and internet donation drives.

Cases of animal hoarders and exploiters passing themselves off as legitimate rescue groups have increasingly made the news in recent years. In 2013, over 100 "rescued" dogs were found languishing in a warehouse in Brooks, Oregon. Almost all of the dogs were emaciated and many suffered from untreated wounds. Most had been pulled from overcrowded shelters in California. ORS 609.415 allows for licensing and inspection of all animal rescue entities housing more than 10 dogs and provides a measure of insurance to protect vulnerable animals from exploitation. Senate Bill 4 clarifies the original intent of this law to apply to rescue groups that house their animals in multiple facilities, often crossing municipal or county lines.

While the lion's share of animal rescuers are responsible individuals working tirelessly to save as many homeless pets as possible, we know that those who operate on the dark side of animal rescue often hoard or hide animals in multiple locations. Senate Bill 4 will ensure that those rescue entities do not escape the regulations outlined in ORS 609.415 simply by the fact that they choose to diversify the locations where their animals are housed.

**Please vote yes on SB 004.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Harmon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sharon Harmon  
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