



Date: May 21, 2015

To: **Senate Committee on Judiciary**
Senator Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senator Jeff Kruse, Vice Chair

From: Sharon Harmon
Executive Director, Oregon Humane Society

Re: **House Bill 2693**

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 HB 2693.

When asked to investigate a case of sexual assault of an animal, even the most seasoned police officer is likely to shudder with disgust. The subject is one of ultimate taboo; the thought that a person would harm, and sometimes even kill, an animal for sexual gratification is unimaginable to most of us.

Bestiality has been documented¹ in relation to crimes against people when retrospective reports of incarcerated men have been examined. This is inclusive of the connection to child sexual assault, domestic violence, and the making of child or animal pornography.

Animal victims of bestiality share much in common with child victims of sexual abuse—they are often powerless to resist their abusers and are incapable of speaking out or rescuing themselves. We know that the production of pornographic images and video footage requires the act of animal sexual abuse, and we know that those who engage in the purchase, collection and viewing of these images are likely to engage in bestiality themselves. Outlawing the possession and viewing of images involving the sexual assault of animals creates a significant break in the chain of animal sexual assault and the partnering crimes of domestic violence and child sexual abuse.

Sincerely,

Sharon Harmon
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¹Hensley, Tallichet & Singer, 2006; Simons, Wurtele & Durham, 2008