

OREGON HUMANE SOCIETY

March 16, 2023

To: House Committee on Judiciary
From: Shayna Rogers, Oregon Humane Society
Re: HB 3571

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan, Members of the Committee:

My name is Shayna Rogers, and I am a member of the board of directors of the Oregon Humane Society (OHS). OHS is Oregon's largest and oldest animal welfare organization, with over 50,000 supporters statewide. We are not affiliated with any local or national organization.

Today, we ask for your support of HB 3571.

First, some context for this bill. As the committee may be aware, domestic animals are property under state law. That means that the finder of a stray dog or cat must go through an onerous and poorly understood 90-day notice-and-hold process before they can obtain legal ownership of the animal. Although counties are permitted to adopt out dogs after a reduced hold period of only three days, there is not a clear exception for stray cats.

As a result, stray cats are underserved in this state. Where animal services exist, such services are generally limited to stray dogs (this is the case, for example, in Clackamas, Marion, Jefferson, and Yamhill counties). Stray cats and their advocates are left with few options in many communities, including my home county of Marion.

Private nonprofits try to fill in the gap by accepting stray cats, but they cannot legally rehome these cats without lengthy delay and extraordinary cost. A 90-day hold requirement puts tremendous financial stress on a shelter and tremendous emotional stress on an animal. The current model is simply unworkable.

HB 3571 would allow certain private shelters to accept stray cats and provide a vital service to our communities at no cost to the government. It would expand the number of potential service providers to assist with cat overpopulation and homelessness, while protecting these providers from liability for their good-faith efforts to accept and rehome stray cats.

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Based on conversations with our peer organizations and other stakeholders, OHS enthusiastically supports the -1 amendments to the bill.

In short, we need to ensure both that the stray cats in our communities are cared for and that the people who care for them can do so freely and without fear of repercussions. HB 3571 accomplishes this, and it does so with private – not public – funds. On behalf of OHS, I ask for your support of this bill.

Please vote “yes” on HB 3571.

Sincerely,



Shayna Rogers

Board member, Oregon Humane Society