



**TO: Sen. Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Sen. Kim Thatcher, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary**

FR: Oregon District Attorney's Association

RE: Support SB 696

February 20, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to offer support from the Oregon District Attorneys Association (ODAA) for SB 696, which would fund an animal cruelty-focused prosecutor in the Oregon Department of Justice's Criminal Division.

Currently Oregon's only statewide resource for animal cruelty is funded by a private grant and the resource prosecutor has worked out of the Benton County District Attorney's office. This resource has been invaluable for prosecutors, law enforcement and communities by providing assistance, training and in some cases prosecution of animal abuse crimes.

This bill would be a commonsense step towards enhancing the impact and the effectiveness of the animal cruelty prosecutor position. Currently, all other statewide resource prosecutors, like the animal cruelty prosecutor, are funded through and are a part of the Oregon Department of Justice. Those prosecutors have access to the Department of Justice's statewide resources including investigators, analysts and case support services. Passage of this bill would allow the animal cruelty prosecutor to have access to those resources by becoming part of the Department of Justice's institutional structure.

Additionally, inclusion of the animal cruelty prosecutor at the Department of Justice will allow for greater opportunity to provide a more uniform response to animal cruelty throughout Oregon.

ODAA is grateful for the work that the animal cruelty prosecutor has done and to the Benton County District Attorneys office for providing the support the position has required in the past. Passage of this bill would build open the good work that has already been accomplished by this position and ODAA respectfully urges the Committee to support it.