



February 22, 2023

Senate Judiciary Committee / Senate Bill 696: Support

Dear Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Committee Members:

The Oregon Veterinary Medical Association supports Senate Bill 696.

Oregon consistently ranks among the top states in the country with regard to our animal protection laws – a distinction that we can be proud of. And this committee in particular has historically served as a beacon of support for strengthening such laws, and ensuring that the health and welfare of animals – from pets to livestock – in our state are best protected from neglect and cruelty, while also backing good animal husbandry practices.

Twenty-eight years ago, the Oregon legislature enacted House Bill 3377, which elevated aggravated animal abuse from a misdemeanor to a felony. There were about a dozen similar laws across the country at the time, and Oregon's became the toughest of them all. That was a seminal moment for our efforts to address the seriousness of animal neglect and cruelty in Oregon.

Today, we believe another such moment is before you, to help pass Senate Bill 696 and secure a funded position within the Department of Justice for an animal cruelty-focused attorney. This action would show Oregon's continued dedication to supporting the well-being of animals, animal law enforcement officers, and the state prosecutors addressing these serious animal crimes. It is another important step towards ensuring that animal cruelty cases will be effectively prosecuted in our state, and that those who harm animals will be held accountable for their actions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gail

Gail Schroder, DVM, President
Oregon Veterinary Medical Association

