



February 9, 2024

House Committee on Judiciary

RE: House Bill 4043

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice-Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Wallan, and Committee Members:

The Oregon Veterinary Medical Association supports House Bill 4043.

Oregon consistently ranks among the top states in the country with regards to our animal protection laws – a distinction that we can be proud of. The judiciary committees in both the House and Senate historically have 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 supporting good animal husbandry practices.

Twenty-nine 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.

Now, another such moment is before you.

House Bill 4043:

- Creates the crime of interfering with an animal cruelty investigation and/or veterinary examination in such investigations.
- Adds an aggravating factor to Oregon's current Animal Neglect in the First-Degree statute, when an individual intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causes serious physical injury or death of the animal.

At Thursday's hearing on House Bill 4043, Rep. Charlie Conrad, chief sponsor of the legislation, emphasized that -2 amendments support continued allowance for good animal husbandry, the practice of veterinary medicine, pest control, wildlife management, and ranching practices with livestock, etc. The OVMA supports this important clarification.

House Bill 4043 is another important step towards ensuring that animal cruelty cases will be effectively investigated and prosecuted in our state, and that those who commit egregious offenses against animals will be held accountable for their actions.

We urge your support of House Bill 4043 and thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jill

Jill E. Parker, VMD, DACVS
President, Oregon Veterinary Medical Association

