

March 16, 2025

To whom it may concern,

My name is Dr. Jessica Thompson, and I am a veterinarian with 16 years of experience and many of those dedicated to animal welfare and rescue efforts. Throughout my career, I have not only provided medical care to pets but also worked extensively with rescue organizations, including as a board member of NW Animal Companions. I have witnessed firsthand the overwhelming need for increased funding and resources to support veterinary care in underserved communities. I am writing in strong support of the Animal Welfare Trust Act, which would provide much-needed grants to organizations assisting animals in low-income households and neglected areas.

During my career, I have worked alongside countless rescues that are the only safety net for abandoned, injured, and neglected animals. As the Chief of Staff at Vista Pet Hospital and a board member of NW Animal Companions, I also collaborate with multiple rescue groups, including PDX Cat Trapper, to address the overwhelming crisis of homeless and suffering animals. Unfortunately, many of these organizations struggle to afford even the most basic care, as they receive no government funding yet and are expected to shoulder the burden of cost for animal welfare in our communities.

Rescues are often forced to operate on minuscule budgets, with adoption fees that do not even cover the cost of spay/neuter procedures, vaccinations, flea control, and deworming. Meanwhile, government-run shelters frequently turn away stray and injured animals, leaving them to suffer on the streets. This is especially true for cats, who are often dismissed as a "community problem" rather than acknowledged as vulnerable beings in need of care. The lack of financial support for rescue groups and veterinary services in underserved areas has placed an unsustainable strain on those of us who have dedicated our lives to helping these animals.

The creation of the Animal Welfare Trust would be a crucial first step toward addressing this imbalance by ensuring that organizations providing veterinary care to at-risk animals receive the funding they need. In addition to supporting rescue groups, this bill would help keep pets in their homes by offering assistance to low-income families who might otherwise be forced to surrender their beloved companions due to the cost of veterinary care. By investing in these efforts, we can help reduce pet homelessness, ease the burden on rescues, and improve the overall well-being of animals across Oregon.

I urge you to support this legislation and help create a more equitable system where both rescues and vulnerable pet owners receive the assistance they desperately need. The

animals in our communities deserve better, and this bill is an important step in ensuring they receive the care and protection they need.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you would like further insight from a veterinary and rescue perspective.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Jessica Thompson, DVM**

Chief of Staff, Vista Pet Hospital

Board Member, NW Animal Companions