

TO: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

RE: HB 3871

I was born in France while my father was stationed there during the Korean War. Upon our return to the United States, my family settled in Baker City, OR where I attended elementary and high school. Our home was filled with a variety of pets including cats, dogs, birds and my sweet little rat, Ratto. I attended college at Eastern Oregon State University in LaGrande, OR where I graduated with a teaching degree and subsequently taught elementary school in Oregon, mostly second grade, retiring after 30 years of teaching. I have lived in Oregon for most of my life. Our home is currently shared with two pampered, almost spoiled, dogs.

For the past several years, I have been a foster-of-last-resort for a local rescue organization. I enjoy my retirement, however, on occasion I have been intermittently guilty and/or coerced into fostering animals who present in dire circumstances with no other options. As an emergency foster, sometimes the foster animal only stays with me a couple of days. On the other hand, I also fostered an adult cat in my laundry room for several months.

Rescue is not for the faint-hearted. Traumatized animals forget they are house-broken, some don't like the type of litter or food you set out, some are too scared to go outside in the fenced backyard after dark to pee without having someone stand out there (usually in the rain) with them, and some cry/whimper all night.

I love Oregon but surely we can do better than this example from the Pennies for Pooches website:

*WHO ARE WE ? Pennies for Pooches/ Curry County Animal Shelter is the agency for all of Curry County for dog licensing and the agency to care for all the unwanted and orphaned dogs that are placed in the county shelter. The staff and volunteers try very hard to find new and better homes for the animals that are received. **Pennies for Pooches is the 501c3 that will run Curry County Animal Shelter as the County has ran out of government funding. Pennies for Pooches will continue to do the medical and food expenses of the shelter.***

The Curry County Animal Shelter is proud to be a no-kill shelter. Only animals too ill or severely injured are euthanized. When over-crowding becomes a problem, volunteers take the dogs to the Oregon Humane Society or Greenhill, giving them a larger population to draw from for their adoption. All those taken so far have found new families. The shelter collects grocery receipts (Ray's Food Place, McKay's Market,- all local stores of the county). Mail or drop them off at the shelter; these all earn extra income to help with expenses (and they DO help!) . Proceeds from all these receipts go to our spay/neuter program sponsored by Pennies for Pooches, the non profit behind the shelter. Pennies for Pooches pays for all the medical needs for the dogs pays the shipping cost on the food.

How can it be that taxpayers in an Oregon county can “run out of government funding” and then rely on a Rescue that is relying on **grocery receipts** to fund animal services in their county? Rescue volunteers are resourceful and committed advocates but it is unfair to place the funding burden on them in addition to caring for the animals and finding them loving homes.

I would like to see HB 3871 pass so that Oregon citizens are supporting Oregon animals. I would REALLY like 30-40% of the Animal Welfare Trust task force to be composed of rural (or small) rescue volunteers.

Cheris Owens
Emergency-Foster-Of-Last-Resort