

My name is Doctor Patti Smith, and I have been a small animal veterinarian for the last 25 years. Twenty-one of these years have been in the state of Oregon. I work in private practice but have volunteered my time extensively in helping several rescue groups and non-profits. I am a strong advocate of animal welfare, rights and wellbeing, especially for cats and dogs with no owners or advocates. Currently, the state of Oregon is failing these animals.

Last year, a new proposal called the ARE (Animal Rescue Program) went into effect. In my opinion, this has seemingly penalized non-profits and rescues across Oregon to no benefit for homeless animals. My belief was that the creation of this act would advance animal welfare in rooting out unreputable fake rescues through implementation of a standard of care. I do not see any evidence that this has happened. What I have seen is an increase in fees for non-profits and absolutely no oversight of breeders, which I find ridiculous. One of the small rescue groups I volunteer for had a 33% increase in licensing fees because of the new fee structure. If the funding burden is going to fall to organizations, then all organizations involved with animal populations and care should be treated equally. Breeders are contributing to over population. This affects rescues and shelters and holds no accountability for the breeders.

At a time when up to 25% of rescue or shelter animals are pure-bred cats or dogs, I believe we must look at the source of some of the problems and not penalize the groups helping the animals. If non-profits must pay the oversight fees, for-profit breeders of dogs and cats absolutely need to contribute to the solution. The creation of SB 1076 the Breeder License Bill will help lessen the burden incurred by the groups created to help animals.

The ARE act is already in effect for non-profits who receive no taxpayer money, and this is detrimental to the welfare of animals. The groups helping the animals pay the price for helping them. This has led to some groups reducing the amount of help they can give animals. The increase in fees is straining small rescues who are already challenged to make ends meet. And yet, breeders are not held accountable to the same standards and fees.

This is especially vital for groups intaking felines. There is almost no care in Oregon for abandoned, injured or stray cats except for private rescue groups and non-profits. Right now, concerned citizens who call local shelters about these vulnerable felines are being told to “leave the cat where it is”. This solution is both unhelpful, inhumane, unhealthy for the people and animals in the community and will contribute to

more work for already over-taxed and over-worked private rescue groups.

Today, I am writing to ask if non-profits and rescue groups must pay to assist vulnerable animals, that an identical program be implemented to regulate for breeders. Anything less is a disservice to the animals of Oregon. They deserve better.

Thank you for your time,

Dr. Patti Smith