

Written Testimony in Support of HB 4034

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

Dear Co-Chairs Helm and Owens and Members of the Committee:

Humane World for Animals respectfully submits this testimony in support of HB 4034 on behalf of a broad coalition of Animal Rescue Entities serving communities throughout the state, many of which operate in rural or mixed rural-urban areas with limited local animal control capacity.

Why This Matters

Animal rescues and shelters are an essential part of Oregon's companion animal welfare and public safety system. Operating largely through private donations and volunteers, these organizations provide shelter, medical care, and rehoming services for animals that would otherwise fall to local governments or the state, particularly in areas with limited animal control capacity.

In 2024 alone, 65,764 dogs and cats entered Oregon's shelter and rescue system, according to Shelter Animals Count. Many rescues, especially those serving rural communities, are already operating at or beyond capacity. When these organizations are overburdened by regulatory costs and administrative penalties unrelated to companion animal welfare, fewer animals receive care, and communities lose vital services.

The Problem with the Current Animal Rescue Entity (ARE) Statute

Since its creation, the ARE program has generated consistent concerns from regulated animal rescue entities—not about the goal of oversight, but about how the statute operates in practice

Animal Rescue Entities have reported:

- Overly rigid record-keeping requirements embedded in statute.
- Escalating licensing fees within a fee-funded program.
- Significant and cumulative penalties for technical, non-welfare-related violations; and
- A statute so prescriptive that limits administrative flexibility and increases compliance costs for both the agency and regulated nonprofits.

These challenges disproportionately affect small, volunteer-run rescues with limited administrative capacity—organizations that are nonetheless critical partners in companion animal welfare and community services and safety.

What HB 4034 Does

HB 4034 is intentionally limited in scope. It makes targeted statutory corrections by removing highly prescriptive operational detail from statute and allowing technical requirements to be addressed through administrative rulemaking.

This approach reduces administrative overhead, stabilizes licensing fees, and allows agency staff and regulated entities to focus on meaningful outcomes rather than paperwork and record-keeping.

The Goal

The goal of HB 4034 is straightforward: to restore balance to a fee-funded program so that limited agency and nonprofit resources are directed toward companion animal care, public safety, and support services, and toward accountability—particularly in under-resourced communities—not toward avoidable administrative penalties and compliance traps.

The bill preserves oversight, due process, and existing agency authority, while addressing structural issues that have made the program increasingly costly and difficult to administer.

Conclusion

HB 4034 reflects a pragmatic solution informed by the real-world experiences of rescues across Oregon. We respectfully urge the committee to support HB 4034 and move the bill forward this session.

Humane World for Animals and our coalition partners appreciate your consideration and are available to serve as a resource as you evaluate this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Peterson
Humane World for Animals

Coalition Support for Reforming Oregon's Animal Rescue Entity (ARE) Program HB 4034

We, the undersigned organizations, support HB 4034, legislation to reform Oregon's Animal Rescue Entity (ARE) program to reduce unnecessary administrative burdens and prevent disproportionate penalties for nonprofit animal rescues.

Under current law, animal rescue entities are subject to rigid statutory requirements that have resulted in excessive fines for technical, non-welfare paperwork violations. These penalties disproportionately impact small, nonprofit, and volunteer-run organizations—particularly in rural communities—and divert limited resources away from animal care.

HB 4034 addresses these concerns by removing overly prescriptive requirements from statute and allowing greater flexibility through administrative rules. This narrowly tailored reform reduces the risk of cumulative penalties while preserving basic standards and due process.

Animal rescues provide essential public services across Oregon.

We urge the Legislature to support this commonsense reform to ensure the ARE program is fair, workable, and does not unintentionally undermine lifesaving work.

Signed,

*Agave Dogs Rescue, Beavercreek
Animal Aid, Portland
Blue Mountain Humane Association, La Grande
Cascade Canine Rescue, East & West, Bend
Cat Adoption Team, Sherwood
Cat's Cradle Rescue, Hillsboro
Community Cat Advocacy Team, Springfield
Greenhill Humane Society, Eugene
Fences For Fido, Statewide
Friends of Felines, Keizer
Fur Love Haven, Portland
Fuzz Ball Animal Rescue, Hermiston
Harney County Save A Stray Rescue, Burns
Hazel's House Animal Rescue, Newberg
Humane Society of Cottage Grove
Indigo Rescue, Hillsboro
Kayla's Foundation
Lancaster Four Dog Rescue, Portland
Laurie's Home for Wayward Cats, Medford
Love a Pit Rescue, Winston*

*Many Miles 2 Home Rescue, Veneta
Melly Cat Rescue, Jacksonville/Rogue Valley
Meow Village, Aurora
New Beginnings SPCA, Roseburg
Northwest Animal Companions, Portland
Northwest Dog Rescue, Eugene
Oregon Dog Rescue, Portland
Oregon Friends of Shelter Animals, Hillsboro
Oregon Humane Society, Portland
Pacific Pug Rescue, Portland
Pendleton Animal Welfare Society (PAWS)
Rat Way Sanctuary, Portland
Rogue Valley Humane Society, Grants Pass
Rogue Valley Street Dogs, Talent
SNYP Spay/Neuter Clinic, Jackson County
Tucker's Cupboard, Cottage Grove
Underdogs Rock! Rescue, Portland
Wiggly Tails Dog Rescue, Eugene
Wildwood Farm Sanctuary, McMinnville*

