



Date: April 6, 2017

To: **House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources**

Representative Brian Clem, Chair
Representative Susan McLain, Vice-Chair
Representative Sherrie Sprenger, Vice-Chair
Representative Greg Barreto
Representative Sal Esquivel
Representative Caddy McKeown
Representative Karin Power
Representative David Brock Smith
Representative Brad Witt

From: **Sharon Harmon**
CEO, Oregon Humane Society

Re: **House Bill 3044**

Established in 1868, the Oregon Humane Society (OHS) is the state's largest and oldest animal welfare organization with over 50,000 supporters statewide. We are not affiliated with any local or national organization.

We urge you to support HB 3044.

The caller was tearful, her voice shaking. She had just witnessed a dog nearly fall from the bed of a truck while the driver of the truck sped obliviously at a high rate of speed down the street. She watched helplessly, images of the potential scene flashing through her mind - the little brown dog falling to the pavement - the blood, the yelping – the unavoidable impact when she or another driver struck the dog, possibly colliding with other cars as well. The caller followed the truck into a parking lot to speak with the driver, assuming he may not be aware of the near miss, that he would surely want to know that his beloved companion was at risk. Instead, the driver told her that if the dog should fall from the truck it would *teach the dog a lesson* – that next time, the dog wouldn't get so close to the edge.

Appalled, the caller wondered what else she could do to look out for this dog's safety. Just as several other Oregon citizens do each year, she called the Oregon Humane Society, knowing that

our Humane Special Agents are commissioned to enforce Oregon's animal welfare laws. Regretfully, just as we have told other concerned citizens, we informed the caller that there is little we could do to prevent this dog from becoming one of approximately 100,000 dogs that are killed or injured each year in the United States in falls from moving vehicles. We informed her that the driver of the truck was not in violation of the law as it is written because the near-tragedy she witnessed occurred on a city street, not a "highway." Finally, we told the caller that even if the incident had occurred on the highway, that the consequences to the driver would be nothing more than a traffic violation – surely not enough to change the driver's behavior and protect the scruffy little brown dog from "learning" a painful and terrible lesson.

Most of our canine companions find joy in a ride in the car; they relish the sun and the breeze but primarily their delight stems from being included. They know nothing of the risks involved – nothing of texting drivers, of accidents, of malfunctioning engines. Dogs don't know that jumping out of the back of a truck to chase that squirrel would result in horrifically painful and possibly fatal injuries. They don't know that however careful we are behind the wheel, there are circumstances beyond our control. They simply want to be with us. Oregon's laws protect human passengers – shouldn't our loyal canine passengers be protected as well?

Please vote YES on HB 3044.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Harmon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sharon Harmon
CEO, Oregon Humane Society
sharon@oregonhumane.org
(503) 416-2992