

June 14, 2021

Dear Representative:

Please support House Bill 3318 which will treat dog training facilities on farm property the same as horse training facilities for the purpose of the Oregon building code.

Horse training facilities are able to operate under an exception from the state commercial building code when the facility is on a farm, is occupied by 10 or fewer people at all times, is not a building regulated by the State Fire Marshall, and is not within a floodplain. ORS 455.315. HB 3318 will allow dog training facilities to operate under the same exemption when the same conditions are met.

This is not a land use bill and will not change land use rules for dog training. Oregon law already allows dog training to take place on agriculturally zoned properties. However, unlike horse training facilities, dog training facilities must comply with the commercial building code which is impracticable for almost all of the dog training community. Horse training facilities are not required to comply with these expensive codes. HB 3318 simply allows for dog training to occur under the same building conditions as horse training.

Under the current building code, if a farmer wishes to offer horse training in a farm building they do not have to make any particular improvements to the building to use it as a training facility. However, if the farmer wants to use the exact same building for dog training, the building must be improved to meet the state building codes. There is no reason why these two activities should be considered differently under the law.

Dog training facilities on agricultural property use buildings that are designed for other agricultural purposes, none of which are required to comply with the commercial building code. Often these buildings are used for dual purposes or may need to be converted back to another farm-related use when they are no longer used for dog training. Requiring the dog training facilities to enhance agricultural buildings when those enhancements are not needed for any other purpose is an arbitrary and unnecessary barrier to an activity allowed under Oregon land use laws.

By supporting this bill you will show your support for access to dog training and for the dog enthusiast community. Dogs are a huge part of Oregon culture and are considered a member of the household for many families. Allowing training facilities to operate similar to horse training facilities will help dog owners access training that helps their companions become great family members and gives them enrichment that they cannot access in the city.

Personal, I participate in dog agility with my dogs. This bill is a very important for the agility community because we do need access to large spaces which are not generally available in the urban environments. Agility is a growing sport because both the dogs and the people benefit from the physical and mental challenges presented in dog agility. This bill would mean that agility could continue to be an affordable sport for participants because the facilities would be relieved from the financial burdens of enhancing agricultural buildings to comply with the building code. Again, this is a benefit that the horse community already receives.

Dog training and the presence of dogs on farm property is still regulated in other ways: Counties regulate nuisance barking; Oregon statutes provide recourses for dogs at large or which chase livestock; and ORS 215.283 limits dog training to ten dogs per class and six classes per day, just to name a few examples. HB 3318 has no effect on any of these laws or regulations.

Please support HB 3318 and help more dogs and their families access beneficial training opportunities in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Hannah McCausland