



HUMANE VOTERS | OREGON

Testimony of Humane Voters Oregon on House Bill 2915 House Committee on Business and Labor

February 9, 2023

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Elmer and Sosa, and Members of the Committee:

Humane Voters Oregon is a nonprofit organization that works in Oregon's political process and elections to promote humane treatment of animals. We are not affiliated with any other state or national organization.

Humane Voters Oregon supports House Bill 2915. With the proposed amendments, this bill would prohibit retail pet stores from selling dogs or cats. As amended, it would apply to any new retail pet stores, and to existing pet retail stores if they change ownership.

We support HB 2915 primarily because it would help reduce the demand that fuels inhumane mass breeding operations (aka "puppy mills"). Currently, retail pet stores that sell cats and dogs increase demand for animals bred in inhumane conditions and may sell sick puppies and kittens without full transparency.¹ By preventing additional stores from selling dogs and cats, this legislation will help drive the pet market toward more humane sources, including shelters and rescues.

We also believe that HB 2915 will help to find more homes for the many pets in Oregon who are in need. If dogs and cats are not sold in retail pet stores, more people will turn to adoption alternatives, which may result in fewer companion animals euthanized due to capacity limitations at shelters, and fewer animals left without homes overall.²

Meghan Jones

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¹ PAWS, a nonprofit organization that assists in rehoming shelter animals, estimates that 90% of puppies sold in pet stores come from puppy mills, where inhumane treatment and disease is commonplace. Spots has reported that only about half of the puppies born into puppy mills will survive the first 12 weeks, and that mill puppies are 41.6% more likely to develop health issues than the general population of dogs. Additionally, the Humane Society of the United States estimates that there are at least 10,000 puppy mills in the United States, yet fewer than 3,000 are regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This leaves room for inhumane conditions and handling, and a lack of transparency in the dog breeding industry.

² The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals currently estimates that, nationwide, approximately 920,000 shelter animals are euthanized (390,000 dogs and 530,000 cats) each year. The number of dogs and cats euthanized in U.S. shelters annually has declined from approximately 2.6 million in 2011. This decline can be partially explained by an increase in the percentage of animals adopted. (The national statistics are relevant because Oregon's shelters and rescues frequently receive animals from other states, and this correlation between increased adoptions and fewer euthanizations is promising for the impact that this bill could have.)