

Submitter: Allene Piland
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB3214

NO to HB3214

Dear House Judiciary Committee Members,

As lifelong lover of animals, I oppose HB3214. The current law, Oregon Revised Statute Chapter 167 protects animals from cruelty by punishing those who violate animal welfare laws. There is already an existing law that needs to be enforced rather than passing new and unnecessary legislation. The wording of this bill, even though attempts to clarify were made, is still too vague to properly target only the intended offenders.

During the March 16 hearing, the Committee was told that educational programs are exempt from the reach of HB3214. This is simply isn't true. Only accredited facilities or licensed groups are exempt, and the process to fall into either category is incredibly difficult unless you are a large, public organization. Small, responsible exotic owners will be punished for volunteering to teach grade school children about their animals. Interactions like those in class, or even during extracurriculars like Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, are vital to help children learn about animals that otherwise they may never encounter up close. I personally own small reptiles and I know that I care for them well. If this bill passes, it means that if I were to bring them into Oregon to take part in a small educational program on exotics, I would subsequently be categorized into the same group of people who abuse their animals. This is heartbreaking to me.

HB3214 lacks proper research and includes species that shouldn't be listed. The March 16th hearing unfortunately presented misinformation, the Committee was told that only "giant" and "large and wild" animals are banned under this bill. An example of the animals that this bill would affect is any tortoise or monitor lizard, even though some species weigh less than one pound as adults. Another species is the sugar glider which only weighs four to five ounces. These animals pose no public safety threats to the people of Oregon. If the concern is directed at the well being of the animals, then current animal cruelty laws can be enforced.

The bill is written without proper information being considered and is rather redundant. Abusers can already be prosecuted under existing legislation, so why create more? This new bill will only accidentally harm good people who treat their animals well and just want to educate others.

Thank you for your time and consideration. HB3214 is vague and threatening to responsible owners who have done no wrong, and I am not alone in this opinion. Intent doesn't matter when the language used is poorly chosen, I hope this will be realized and dissuade HB3214 from being passed.

Sincerely,
Allene Piland