

April 3, 2023

Chair Jeff Golden
Vice Chair Fred Girod
Members of the Committee
Senate Committee on Natural Resources

RE: HB 2689 – Rabbit Slaughter Bill

Dear Chair Golden, Vice Chair Girod, and members of the Committee:

This day and age, it is baffling that all animals are not included in Oregon Humane Slaughter- Chapter 603. Cattle, equines, sheep and swine are not the only animals worthy of humane treatment before slaughter. It is further perplexing that lawmakers are not taking steps to correct this oversight by amending HB2689 to add rabbits to Oregon's humane slaughter statutes. It seems a simple and expedient way to correct an egregious error that is very unbecoming for Oregon.

As Director of Red Barn Rabbit Rescue for over ten years, I have rescued and cared for hundreds of rabbits of all kinds and am closely familiar with the characteristics and needs of rabbits. Rabbits are prey animals and are highly sensitive to their surroundings. Rabbits are so sensitive to their environment that they are often recommended as therapy animals because the owner is forced into a calm state of mind in order to have a successful interaction with the rabbit. Our rabbits are kept inside in quiet and climate-controlled buildings. Strangers, loud noises, and other stressors would cause obvious fear and discomfort that could be as mild as thumping and as disconcerting as slamming into the walls of the cage units and "screaming". When rabbits are in a state of extreme fear, they are capable of letting out a very shrill sound that sounds like a scream. While in a state of panic, they can injure themselves or other cage mates in order to exercise their "flight" approach to the fear. In some cases, rabbits can be frightened to death.

There is no reason why rabbits cannot be kept in clean and quiet surroundings before they are slaughtered. There is no reason why rabbits cannot be humanely rendered unconscious before slaughter to avoid fear and stress, as is required for other food animal species.

It is abundantly clear that the slaughter of animals for food is not stopping anytime soon. That does not mean we cannot show them appreciation and compassion for their sacrifice. It is a small ask that they be provided with the basic decency of a quick, humane death at slaughter.

Please tell me that we have evolved enough as a society to show gratitude to these animals by way of proper housing, feeding, and humane slaughter practices.

Oregon is a state that has shown over and over that it cares for animals. We can make it even better by taking a stand for ALL animals subject to slaughter.

Thank you,

Heather Crippen
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