



Formerly called the Humane Society
of the United States

Testimony in support of HB 3604

House Committee on Judiciary
March 11, 2025

On behalf of Humane World for Animals, we respectfully submit this testimony to the Committee in support of House Bill 3604 and of the forthcoming amendments to strengthen the language as introduced.

This bill fills a gap both state and local law which fails to adequately provide for domestic cats. HB 3604 provides both authority and protections to animal holding agencies in handling stray and abandoned cats, increases the opportunity for reuniting lost cats with their families and establishes that returning cats to the location where they were found is not “abandonment.” These upgrades to Oregon’s existing cruelty statute will help communities across Oregon manage cats and protect those organizations and individuals who contribute to cat management programs.

State abandonment laws often pre-date the broad adoption of trap-neuter-return (TNR) programs to manage free-roaming, outdoor cat populations by communities across the country. As a result, many abandonment laws may be interpreted to apply to the return of cats after they have been sterilized as part of a humane management effort. HB 3604 will clear up any confusion and provide local governments the assurance needed to implement TNR programs and expand the effective tools at their disposal for managing cat populations and resolving community complaints. Additionally, it will protect community members and volunteers who participate in these programs from the risk of undue prosecution.

The American Bar Association, in a 2017 resolution in support of TNR policy, notes that abandonment laws should not be interpreted as to prevent the return of cats and suggests that “for clarity, the abandonment law should expressly exempt cats being returned as part of a TNR management program. In recent years, South Dakota and Texas have updated their abandonment laws to support TNR efforts, joining Illinois, Iowa, Maine and Nevada.

Overall, HB 3604 will strengthen Oregon’s animal shelters and their ability to serve cats and the public and will support existing and innovative cat management programs. We respectfully ask the committee to vote in favor of House Bill 3604.