

March 14, 2025

To whom it may concern:

My name is Dr. Jessica Thompson, and I have been a veterinarian for 16 years. Before becoming a veterinarian, I dedicated myself to rescuing cats in every community I lived in. Currently, I serve as the Chief of Staff at Vista Pet Hospital, Portland, Oregon, where I work closely with numerous rescue organizations to help animals in need. I am also a board member of NW Animal Companions and collaborate with PDX Cat Trapper, where I witness some of the worst cases of neglect and suffering among Oregon's homeless animals, particularly cats, who are often overlooked and left to suffer on the streets.

It is deeply troubling that the state of Oregon is failing to provide adequate support for these vulnerable animals. Instead of addressing the root causes of pet overpopulation and neglect, the burden has been placed almost entirely on non-profit rescue organizations—groups that receive no government funding yet are expected to pick up the slack where county shelters fall short. Meanwhile, breeders, who directly contribute to the growing number of homeless pets, continue to operate without oversight or responsibility. This is an unacceptable imbalance that must be corrected.

The recent Animal Rescue Entity (ARE) licensing requirement was implemented in Oregon with the stated goal of regulating rescue organizations and eliminating fraudulent operations. It has only served to financially strain legitimate rescues through increased licensing fees and bureaucratic red tape, all while failing to hold breeders accountable. Some non-profits have seen their licensing fees increase by as much as 33% in 2024, making it even harder for them to continue their life-saving work. Adoption fees charged by these rescues do not even cover the full cost of necessary veterinary care, including spay/neuter surgeries, vaccinations, flea control, and deworming, further exacerbating the financial strain on organizations that receive no government funding. If rescues are expected to pay for oversight and regulation, then breeders—who profit from the sale of animals and contribute to the overpopulation problem—must be held to the same, if not higher, standard.

The consequences of this system are devastating. Every day, rescue groups are forced to turn animals away because they simply do not have the resources to care for them. When concerned citizens call county shelters about a stray or injured cat, they are often told to "leave the animal where it is," resulting in unnecessary suffering. This is not a humane or acceptable approach to animal welfare. The state's failure to provide meaningful support to the rescues doing this work has left countless animals without care, while those who profit from breeding continue without accountability.

To address this crisis, I strongly support SB 1076, the Breeder License Bill. This legislation would require breeders to take financial and ethical responsibility for their role in the pet overpopulation crisis by contributing to the solution rather than exacerbating the problem. If non-profits that receive no government funding are required to meet costly regulatory standards, then for-profit breeders must be subject to the same regulations and fees.

Oregon's current policies place an unfair and unsustainable burden on non-profit rescues while giving breeders a free pass. If the government will not provide funding to support the critical work rescues are doing, then it must at least ensure that all entities involved in the care and sale of animals are held to the same standards. The lives of countless animals depend on it.

I urge you to take action and implement fair and equitable policies that truly address the needs of Oregon's homeless animals. The animals in our communities deserve better, and the rescues working tirelessly to save them should not be the ones paying the price while breeders operate unchecked.

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jessica Thompson, DVM

Chief of Staff, Vista Pet Hospital

Board Member, NW Animal Companions