

MARCH 16, 2025 HB 3871, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LAND USE, NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER

Co-Chairs: Representative Ken Helm and Representative Mark Owens
Vice Chair: Representative Sarah McDonald
Members: Representatives Court Boice, Annessa Hartman, Bobby Levy
 Pam Marsh, Susan McLain and Anna Scharf

Members of the Committee:

There are currently six counties: Gilliam, Jefferson, Lake, Morrow, Sherman and Wheeler who DO NOT LIST any licensed Animal Rescue Entities. On-line search for county animal services within these and other Oregon counties may, in fact, either not list a county contact location or may show that the county has contracted out animal shelter services to a rescue such as Douglas County:

Saving Grace Humane Society

Douglas County currently contracts the Saving Grace Humane Society to provide animal shelter services. Our contract guarantees that the citizens of our county can take stray dogs and cats to the shelter without any fee. A small donation is appreciated to help defray shelter costs, but it is not required. For owner release animals, Saving Grace charges a nominal fee.

Compounding the reality of the lack of shelter space, Oregon veterinary clinics were closed during COVID and as they gradually re-open to full services, Oregon continues to struggle with access to spay/neuter services. Without access to spay/neuter surgeries, animal populations continued to increase to the point that Rescues cannot keep up with the resulting cases of malnourishment, infections and injuries. Last year there was an overabundance of painful eye infections in the kittens that Northwest Animal Companions took into rescue. We have already seen this same condition as we start the 2025 kitten season.

In addition, in some parts of Oregon, animals seized and/or abandoned during law enforcement activities, i.e. drug raids, domestic abuse situations or other illegal activities may not have any location funded by either taxes or licensing fees available to help them. Non-profit Rescues are overwhelmed with the resulting volume and need for animal care.

Animals do not choose their environments any more than a newborn child chooses a mother addicted to drugs. Helpless, voiceless animals and children are both at the mercy of society at large to step into situations that the animal/child did not ask for and can't remediate on their own.

Although veterinarians and animal advocates have taken it upon themselves to address animals in no-win situations, we very strongly believe this is not solely a Rescue responsibility. **This is an Oregon responsibility.** Whether Oregon funds animal services through taxes or licensing fees or grants; society itself needs to step up to the plate and provide funding for the clinical care that will address animal disease, provide spay/neuter services and establish a compassionate Oregon response that will support both the two and four-legged Oregon residents throughout our state.

Respectfully,

Elaine Hartman
President
Northwest Animal Companions