

Submitter: Angela Hughes  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and  
Wildfire  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1076

As a veterinarian, veterinary geneticist, dog breeder of a rare and endangered breed, and pet owner, I oppose this bill in its current form, particularly inclusion of the loosely defined term of “breeders”.

First, I want to understand the problem that the inclusion of breeders in this bill is trying to solve. If the concern is animal welfare, Oregon already ranks first in the U.S. for state animal protection laws per the Animal Legal Defense Fund (<https://aldf.org/article/state-animal-protection-laws-ranked-oregon-is-1-north-dakota-50/>).

Additionally, there are significant financial ramifications to instituting a breeder licensing program. Enforcement will be too costly to be reasonably enforceable, yet responsible breeders who produce a few litters or offspring each year will have to manage one more costly legal hurdle. And the pet industry brings significant revenue to the state through purchase of pet care goods and services, as well as for tourism dollars for animal related events like dog shows and agility trials that could be jeopardized by this legislation.

I also wanted to address the fallacy of pet overpopulation. Data shows that we do not face a pet overpopulation problem in Oregon or the U.S. To merely maintain the current population of approximately 90 million dogs in the U.S., it would require 8 million new dogs each year (based on an average life span of 11 years) and does not account for any increase in the pet population. However, the production of dogs in the U.S. has not kept pace with demand. As of 2018, the American Pet Products Association reported that 85% of all U.S. household dogs were spayed or neutered. This has significantly reduced the number of puppies produced in the country and greatly reduced the number of unwanted dogs euthanized annually from several million per year to less than 360,000 in 2023

(<https://www.shelteranimalscount.org/stats>) with the majority now being euthanized for major health or behavioral issues.

As a result of the success of spay/neuter and adoption programs, it's estimated that fewer than 15 states have more adoptable dogs than homes available and Oregon is not one of them (<https://www.naiaonline.org/articles/article/its-now-or-never-help-stop-dog-trafficking-now>). Consequently, shelters and rescues, including the Oregon Humane Society, have been relocating dogs from states with a surplus population to those with a deficit. However, demand has continued to outstrip even that supply, leading shelters to increase dog importations from abroad. The CDC estimated that about 287,000 dogs were imported into the U.S. in 2006 and by 2018, that estimate rose to over one million dogs per year (USDA, 2019). These imported dogs likely experienced significant health and welfare challenges and could be carrying a

number of infectious diseases that pose great risk to animals and people in the U.S. In contrast, responsible breeders like myself exert significant time, effort, and money to produce physically healthy and emotionally stable animals that are placed in appropriate homes. Like many other breeders, I take FULL responsibility for any animal I produce and will take the dog back at any time, for any reason. We are not the problem that needs to be addressed.

Needless to say, further limiting the production of dogs and other animals in Oregon, where their welfare is already covered by existing legislation, will only bolster animal producers outside of the state who do not abide by our strict animal welfare laws. I fear that this will lead to fewer good animals produced here and more animals suffering in worse conditions elsewhere. Please consider the unintended consequences of this bill. Every animal has a breeder (defined as the person who is responsible for managing if/when they reproduce) – it is important to not discourage those doing it well in favor of those who choose not to.

I will happily provide additional information and references on these topics if that is helpful.