

Written Testimony – SB1076 – March 18, 2025

I am David Kelly, the president and co-founder of Oregon Horse Rescue, a non-profit rescue and sanctuary in Eugene that was founded by my wife and me 12 years ago.

I write today regarding the Animal Rescue Entities portion of SB1076, not the breeder portion. I strongly support the Animal Rescue Entities (ARE) program – it helps keep animals and the public safe from pseudo-rescue hoarders and inhumane situations.

SB1076 currently provides a General Fund allocation for the breeder licensing program, but *not* for the ARE program. The bill should be strengthened to provide a small GF allocation for the ARE program as well.

When the ARE program started, rescues received an in-person inspection every year. The program had only a single FTE. As labor costs rose and fees couldn't be raised enough without burdening small non-profits like ours, the program last year was cut to 0.5 FTE. After the cut, in-person inspections were dropped and instead there's only an online submission of required records for inspection annually.

This change had at least a couple of bad effects: (1) Rescues could have very poor conditions for their animals but a mere records submission wouldn't make it possible for this to be known by ODA. (2) The in-person inspection, while rigorous, also allowed for back-and-forth discussion with the inspector. I found out personally this last year that with the records submission there literally isn't an allowed mechanism for me to correct a TYPO in the submission. Instead, ODA must issue me a Notice of Violation and charge me a fine, and then I need to go through a re-submission and Consent Order to get a majority (but not all) of the fine waived.

The ARE program provides a great benefit to the animals and society at large. An appropriation of GF money to support 1.0 or 1.5 FTE would let the program return to in-person inspections, and would avoid onerous fees for the smallest organizations. Please amend Section 9 of SB1076 to provide General Funds for the ARE program as well as the breeder program.

P.S. One other smaller but important request: Section 1 of the bill sets a new fee structure for AREs that assesses a different amount for an "animal shelter" versus an "animal sanctuary". In the current statute and OARs, these terms are not defined but that's not a problem because they are treated identically. However, the bill proposes an annual license fee that is dramatically higher for the former versus the latter. Thus, these terms need to be carefully defined in the bill, and some organizations (like mine) have elements of both "shelter" and "sanctuary".

Thank you for your consideration.

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