

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

My name is Himani Wickramanayake and I strongly support SB 1076. I believe the way we care for the companion animals in our state speaks to the value they hold in our lives, families and our community. Valuing our pets means regulating the ways they are produced, handled, and institutionalized, just as we do any vulnerable population and just as we do any income-generating industry.

Pet breeding is a for-profit business. Any reputable breeder will have no trouble complying with the regulations stipulated in SB 1076 and will welcome the oversight that holds all participants in the industry to the same standard; leveling the playing field, as it were, makes sure that responsible breeders are not disadvantaged by investing resources into proper animal care when irresponsible breeders do not. It legitimizes the breeding industry, and moves toward eliminating the abuses endemic within it.

The euthanasia and sheltering of homeless pets is a huge burden to state resources. Animal Rescue Entities, the county shelter systems, and even law enforcement shoulder an enormous financial and emotional weight caused in no small part by the 'cast offs' of the pet breeding industry. So poorly run businesses are costing the state and the taxpayer untold dollars, and costing the nonprofit rescues that operate out of love, duty and compassion immeasurable resources and heartbreak. The situation is not sustainable. It is dire and ugly. It is a crisis.

Requiring breeders to be licensed and subject to minimal levels of scrutiny and ethics is a step towards alleviating this crisis. Its impact is practical and emblematic. It signals to the animal welfare community that its efforts are supported. It signals to the breeding industry that its potential for creating healthy, ethically bred pets is recognized and that its propensity to create cruel and unsustainable conditions for pets is not tolerated. And it signals to the state of Oregon that companion animals are worthy of our protection.

I implore the committee to advance SB 1076 for the sake of the pets in Oregon and the people who work so hard to care for them.