

Dear Representatives:

I'm writing to express my strong support for HB 3318. I've been involved in dog agility for more than 15 years. For most of this time, I've taken my dogs to weekly training classes to teach them how to negotiate the agility obstacles, to develop our connection as a team, and to practice our skills. Except in the summer, these classes have been held indoors in equine facilities on EFU land.

Dogs who participate in training classes for agility and other performance activities are not the same as those in basic obedience classes or in classes for behavioral challenges. Agility trainers typically have a process to assess a prospective dog-student to make sure they have basic obedience skills and are not aggressive. I would offer that dogs who participate in agility and other performance activities are overall better trained and more responsive to the commands of their owners/handlers than dogs who do not. In all my years of participating in agility training classes and even agility competitions, I have never seen any dog be aggressive towards farm animals on the same property as the facility or even the nearby property.

In addition to screening dogs before they are accepted into classes, trainers usually have high standards for their active dog-students. For agility classes, dogs must be leashed when they are not on the agility course. They must be up to date on vaccinations and must not be aggressive toward other dogs. Also, trainers require owners to manage overly barking dogs, in consideration of nearby property owners. This means that dogs in training classes don't typically engage in what is considered to be "nuisance barking".

It is common that people involved in dog agility and other performance activities are or have been involved in equestrian activities. (In fact, dog agility itself was originally inspired by horse jumping events!) Property owners may choose to offer their equine facility for dog training activities to supplement their income as care for horses can be quite costly. Or they may "downsize" their hobby from horses to dogs and use of their equine facility for dog training activities. The necessary features and amenities in a training facility are essentially identical for equine and canine activities. Regardless of the specific reason, allowing property owners to use their equine facility concurrently or consecutively for dog training activities without the risk of cost-prohibitive upgrades to commercial building code maximizes their financial investment and enjoyment of their property.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cheryl Henning
Salem, OR