

Polk County Democrats condemn Initiative Petition 28 (IP28), a proposed ban on hunting, fishing, and animal agriculture.

Ballot measure would redefine the legal status of animals, directly impacting farmers, ranchers, anglers, and hunters, and causing significant job losses

June 12, 2026

Initiative Petition 28 (the PEACE Act) would remove existing legal exemptions for hunting, fishing, trapping, and farming from state animal abuse laws. If enacted, it would effectively criminalize these activities by treating the killing or intentional injury of most animals as criminal animal abuse.

Animal protections are meaningful and important, but IP28 is not about that. True animal protection work would not defund fisheries and habitat conservation work. They would look at improving funding for pet rescues and spay-and-neuter programs and support wild horse adoption and contraception. Rather than helping animals, IP 28 sets legitimate advocacy back by decades.

Oregon's agricultural industry is far more than a collection of businesses — it is a \$5 billion economic engine that supports more than 80,000 jobs. Yet by criminalizing animal slaughter and standard animal husbandry, IP28 would effectively bring animal agriculture in the state to an end. Processing plants, dairies, and ranches would shut down almost overnight, leaving a vacuum that out-of-state and international producers would quickly move to fill.

The economic fallout of IP 28 to Polk County would be devastating. According to the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture, Polk County is home to 1,158 farms and ranches, 97% which have been family-owned for generations, working 154,851 acres and generating \$249.7 million in agricultural sales. Polk County is Oregon's second-largest Christmas tree producer — a nationally significant industry and is one of the state's top wine grape and grass seed counties,

ranking 9th in Oregon. It is also home to significant dairy operations with \$29 million in milk sales.

IP 28 would criminalize the dairy practices, poultry operations, and livestock management that generate Polk County's livestock income. It would eliminate hunting on agricultural land and undermine the pest and predator management on which Christmas tree and vineyard operations depend. For a county where agriculture is a multi-hundred-million-dollar industry, this initiative is not a policy debate — it is a direct economic threat.

Failing to consider the substantive legal and economic impacts on Oregon's tribal nations, IP 28 contains no explicit exemption or recognition of the treaty-reserved hunting, fishing, and animal stewardship rights of Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribal Nations, raising serious constitutional concerns and ignoring longstanding federal Indian law, and potentially undermining government-to-government relationships and Tribal sovereignty.

While the responsible treatment of animals is a shared value, this measure goes far beyond preventing cruelty and instead threatens the livelihoods of tens of thousands of Oregonians, the stability of our \$5 billion agricultural sector, and the state's long-term food security. Considering these sweeping implications, the Polk County Democrats urge voters, community leaders, and policymakers across Oregon, regardless of political affiliation, to closely examine IP28 and its far-reaching economic and social consequences, and to stand with us in strong opposition to IP28.

About Polk County Democrats

Polk County Democrats support Democratic values and principles through community outreach, voter education, and candidate support. They support Federal, State, and local policies that create a safe, stable, prosperous future for everyone, regardless of age, race, religion, nation of origin, gender, or ability.