



Department of Animal Services

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Director of Animal Services*

Director's Message - Spring 2007

"When Will the Killing Stop?"

Dear Supporters,

Recently I was asked to write an opinion article on Assembly Bill 1634, the California Healthy Pets Bill. With the coming of spring, so comes the onset of homeless, newborn puppies and kittens. Like the seasons throughout the year, those of us at Animal Services can count on thousands of unwanted offspring from indiscriminant, accidental dog and cat breeding. How fitting it is that the above referenced legislation begins its fight through the California State Capitol. Please take the time and read the following answers to some very important questions circulating regarding this bill.

When will the time come when the residents of California say enough is enough and make a stance on ending the unnecessary euthanasia of cats and dogs? I say that time can be now. With the introduction of Assembly Bill 1634, the California Healthy Pets Bill, comes the opportunity and moral obligation for California and its residents to become the model to states and countries around the world for ending the euthanasia of dogs and cats in municipal and private animal shelters.

Why now? Animal organizations in the State of California have spent millions of dollars year after year caring for animals and reducing euthanasia rates with great success, but the ultimate goal continues to elude them for one reason: irresponsible pet owners. These pet owners continue the animal breeding cycle leaving a renewable population of pets, thus forcing animal shelters with finite resources to continue to euthanize surplus pets. AB 1634 puts the onus of responsibility to spay or neuter pets on the owners.

Is this an attempt to stop the breeding of purebred animals all together? Absolutely not and, in fact, many exemptions exist within the bill to ensure the continuity of quality pure bred pets, rather than below-standard or unhealthy pets inhumanely over-bred purely for profit. Exemptions in this bill do allow responsible breeders to continue the genetic lines of purebred dogs and cats and encourage ethical breeding practices.

Is this even enforceable and won't you just target breeders? Animal control programs are complaint driven and enforcement of this bill and others is done on a daily basis by thousands of animal control officers, state-wide. Most reputable breeders interact with animal control agencies primarily to obtain

licenses or kennel permits, they rarely hear from animal control organizations regarding complaints. Breeders for years have done a great job at rescuing purebred animals from shelters. AB 1634 will exempt these reputable breeders from spaying and neutering of their breed stock. On the other hand, the bill allows officers to stop indiscriminate breeding practices through the use of monetary penalties which will be applied to irresponsible pet owners who continue to fail to take advantage of low-cost spay and neuter programs to prevent undesired breeding.

Don't mixed breed animals deserve to have offspring? Until the day comes that California is not euthanizing over 1,000 dogs and cats a day then I say no. Spayed and neutered, mixed-breed dogs and cats make great family companions and deserve to be loved the same as purebred animals. Until the tragedy of pet overpopulation and homelessness in our society is corrected, I cannot support the sad and needless euthanasia of animals simply because we refuse to prevent them from being born.

When will the killing stop? The answer to this question is in the hands of California legislators. Be a part of the solution and join me in supporting AB 1634.

For more information on how to support AB 1634:

<http://www.cahealthypets.com/>

For information on how you can help Animal Services through animal foster care, please contact the Foster Care Program at 951-358-7041.

Robert