



CALIFORNIA HEALTHY PETS ACT 2007
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Healthy Pets Act Passes First Hurdle

Mandatory spaying and neutering of most California dogs and cats will save taxpayers millions

SACRAMENTO – The California Healthy Pets Act hit a major milestone this morning when it was heard by the Assembly Committee on Business and Professions. Authored by Assemblymember Lloyd Levine (D-Van Nuys), the bill would require most pet owners with a dog or cat over four months old to have their pets spayed or neutered.

“Year after year, California legislators encourage the spaying and neutering of dogs and cats by issuing a Spay Day Resolution,” said Assemblymember Levine, who also serves as Chair of the Assembly Select Committee on Animal Welfare. “But despite our best efforts, dog and cat overpopulation remains a huge fiscal, public safety and ethical problem in California, forcing state and local governments to spend a quarter of a billion taxpayer dollars each year to intake nearly one million unwanted animals and ultimately kill over half. This measure will give law enforcement officials a critical tool in the fight to alleviate this major problem that impacts their departments and the citizens of California in so many negative ways.”

“The language of this vital legislation was crafted by a diverse group of experienced animal control officers, veterinarians, government officials and animal lovers from rural areas to the largest cities and counties in the state,” said Judie Mancuso, Campaign Director for the California Healthy Pets Coalition. “It meets California’s needs and begins bringing this huge fiscal impact down in the most ethical manner. It’s the right legislation at the right time. The needless killing of over 500,000 healthy animals and the waste of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars each year must end.”

115 supporters testified at this morning’s hearing, including veterinarians, animal control officers, and animal advocates. More than 200 organizations and over 1,000 individuals submitted letters in support of the California Healthy Pets Act. The success of today’s hearing comes after a rally in front of the State Capitol yesterday with supporters from across the state.

Due to technical amendments to the legislation made just before today’s hearing, the Assembly Business and Professions Committee agreed to defer the vote to a future meeting. They will likely vote on the California Healthy Pets Act at a meeting later this month.

The California Healthy Pets Act (AB 1634) requires that every dog and cat in the State of California be spayed or neutered. Certain exemptions are provided for service and law-enforcement animals as well as purebred cats and dogs that seldom end up without a home. The bill is largely modeled upon a successful mandatory spay and neuter ordinance that the County of Santa Cruz implemented in 1995. By 2005, although the county’s human population had grown by 15%, its shelter’s intake numbers had plummeted by 64%, from 14,000 to 5,000 animals, the majority of which were already spayed or neutered. This clear success has inspired other jurisdictions, including the Counties of Lake, Los Angeles and Stanislaus and the cities of Sacramento and San Bernardino, to adopt similar measures.

Dog or cat owners found to be in violation of AB 1634 would be subject to a civil penalty of \$500, which could be waived (like a “fix it” ticket) by authorities if their animals get spayed or neutered. All funds from permits and fines will be used to fund the administration, enforcement and outreach efforts of the program as well as free or low-cost spay and neuter efforts.

For more information, please visit our Web site at www.cahealthypets.com.

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