

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Alex Traverso
(916) 319-2647

California Healthy Pets Act Passes Appropriations Committee, Heads to Assembly Floor

*Mandatory Spaying and Neutering of Most California Dogs and Cats will save Taxpayers
Millions*

SACRAMENTO – Assembly Bill 1634 – The California Healthy Pets Act – continued on its path to the Governor’s desk this morning when it was passed by the Assembly Appropriations Committee on a B roll call vote. 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.

“Every year, hundreds of thousands of perfectly healthy and adoptable pets are euthanized by overcrowded shelters that are unable to find them good homes – we need a common sense approach to solve this problem,” Assemblymember Levine said. “In absence of this legislation, California will continue to take a piecemeal approach to pet overpopulation, and things will never really improve, despite medical research showing that spayed or neutered cats and dogs live longer and healthier lives. And with a growing number of free and low-cost spay/neuter services up and down the state, mandatory spay/neuter laws should not pose a financial burden for pet owners.”

“The California Healthy Pets Act will save taxpayers millions and provide a humane alternative to euthanizing hundreds of thousands of unwanted animals who end up in our local shelters,” said Judie Mancuso, Campaign Director for the California Healthy Pets Coalition. “We are pleased that the Assembly Appropriations Committee recognizes the future cost savings of this bill while providing a common sense approach to the growing problem of pet overpopulation. We look forward to presenting it to the full Assembly.”

Nearly 350 supporters attended this morning’s hearing, including veterinarians, animal control officers, and animal advocates. Hundreds of organizations and thousands of individuals have submitted letters in support of the California Healthy Pets Act. The success of today’s hearing comes three weeks after AB 1634’s first hurdle was cleared, when the Assembly’s Business and Professions Committee voted 7-2 in favor of passing the much-needed measure.

The California Healthy Pets Act requires that nearly every dog and cat in the State of California be spayed or neutered. Certain exemptions are provided, including for show and sporting dogs, law-enforcement dogs, dogs used in search and rescue, pets that are too old or in poor health, and guide, service and signal animals. 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.

The California Healthy Pets Act will next be heard by the full Assembly at a date to be determined between now and June 8. For more information, please visit our Web site at www.cahealthypets.com.

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