

diana lejins

to:

Suja Lowenthal, Gary DeLong, Patrick ODonnell, Gerrie Schipske, Dee Andrews, Tonia Uranga-Reyes, Rae Gabelich, Val Lerch, Bob Foster, Robert Garcia

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Cc:

Nancy Muth, Kate Carp, Judy Crumpton, Louise Montgomery, Shirley Vaughan, Laura Dowd, Pat West, Diana Lejins, Justin Rudd, Ron Arias, Bill Pearl

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May 4, 2010

RE: Animal Care Ordinance

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

The Animal Care Ordinance is one of the most critical pieces of legislation Long Beach will consider this year. It is imperative that we support this measure for the health, safety and welfare of our citizens, our animal friends and the City as a whole.

Items considered:

1. Improving health outcomes at the City's shelter and expanding affordable spay and neuter options under the direction of a State Licensed Veterinarian.
2. Increasing return-to-owner rates and responsible pet ownership through the expansion of licensing and vaccination requirements to include cats.
3. Expanding low-cost vaccinations, microchipping, and adoptions through mobile clinics in hard to reach areas of the City.
4. Creating an Animal Care Ambassador program to promote humane education and responsible pet ownership.

We are at a critical moment in our City's history, with the opportunity to fundamentally change the way that we look at animal care issues. The entire operation needs to be focusing on prevention strategies (e.g. spay and neuter), rather than reacting to the problems of overpopulation and irresponsible pet ownership.

Establishing a Citywide Veterinarian is a necessity for preventative medicine, public health, and providing long overdue services directly to the community. When the City began contracting with a part-time veterinarian for just (1) hour a day, the percentage of animals adopted or redeemed increased dramatically. Just imagine if we funded a full-time veterinarian at the Shelter. Providing a veterinarian also sends a vital message that this City is truly committed to animal care.

Regarding cat licensing: When looking at the data, it is clear that we have much different expectations for dog and cat owners. As a result we are impounding and euthanizing cats at a substantially higher rate than dogs (approximately three out of four dogs are adopted or redeemed, while **five out of six cats are euthanized**). What works for dogs can also work for cats.

**Another important aspect is the equity issue. Right now, dog owners are asked to pay almost \$700,000 a year in license fees, while cat owners pay nothing. Everyone should pay their fair share for animal care services, particularly considering that care for cats costs the City far more than the costs associated with dogs.**

Some also say that indoor cats do not need to be licensed or vaccinated because owners claim they will never get out.

Nobody intends for their dogs to get out, but almost 4,000 are impounded at the Shelter every year. The licensing requirement will ensure that animal care services has the tools to return cats to their owners with the success that they have with dogs.

Free roaming cats pose a greater risk of spreading rabies because they come into contact with wildlife more often than dogs. For this reason, cats should be immunized in the same way that dogs are vaccinated for public health and safety.

For those who might consider this a "cat tax", there has been a "cat tax" paid by dog owners and General Fund taxpayers for years. It is estimated that we spend between \$400,000 and \$500,000 per year to impound, care for, and euthanize unwanted cats.

And, last but not least, this new source of revenue should assist the Animal Care Services in funding badly needed services and reducing or eventually eliminating the need to kill our innocent animal friends.

Diana Lejins  
Animal Rights Coalition of Greater Long Beach

Working to make the World a better place,

diana ×



**ARE YOU WILLING TO PULL THE  
TRIGGER???**

**OR, You can vote YES on a responsible Animal  
Care Ordinance!**

**D. Lejins  
ARC-GLB**