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FAX No.

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Long Beach City Council
 333 W. Ocean Blvd
 Long Beach, CA
 November 18, 2014
 FOR OFFICIAL RECORD

Dear Mayor Garcia, Vice Mayor Lowenthal and City Council Members,

The California Federation of Dog Clubs is an association of thousands of dog owners across the State of California. Formed in 1990, the CFoDC works tirelessly to promote animal welfare, educate the public regarding responsible animal ownership, and protect the rights of responsible animal owners. We administer a disaster relief fund, conduct breed ID workshops for shelter personnel, provide educational information on responsible pet ownership. We also man a toll-free assistance line for animal owners who need advice regarding pet training and behavioral issues. We support animal legislation with positive benefits to society.

We are concerned regarding the proposal on tonight's agenda which would require mandatory spay-neuter for the vast majority of pets in your city, and prohibit the retail sales of pets. Long Beach already has such a draconian process for breeder permits that it is doubtful that there is even ONE licensed breeder in your city, and now, this?

The CFODC is **OPPOSED** to the mandated sterilization of pets, regardless of exemptions. We are opposed to high fees and excessive restrictions for licensing and breeding permits. Some of the reasons for our opposition include:

- **The ASPCA, the No Kill Advocacy Center, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Kennel Club and many other animal welfare groups are OPPOSED to mandatory sterilization** because it creates more problems than it solves.
- **Coercive sterilization laws and excessive animal-related fees result in increased shelter intakes and deaths anywhere they are tried. Fewer people will reclaim their pets due to high costs.** Los Angeles has seen a steep rise in shelter intakes since implementing its own mandatory spay/neuter law. So has Memphis, Tennessee.
- **Mandatory sterilization is costly to enforce.**
- **Revenues will drop**, as owners will increasingly avoid licensing and forced surgery on their pets. There will be even **LESS** money for the needed enforcement.
- **Oppressive forced sterilization laws have resulted in increased incidence of RABIES** in some

areas, as owners who avoid licensing may also fail to vaccinate for rabies. This creates a dire risk to human health. Fort Worth TX repealed their mandatory spay-neuter law due to increased cases of rabies exposure.

- Dogs are being smuggled in by the thousands now, from Mexico and other countries, to meet the demand for pets. **Mandatory sterilization creates a black market for dogs and puppies.** Black market pets bring rabies and parasites along with them.
- Feral cats comprise the majority of shelter intakes, and **sterilization mandates do not help feral cats.** The only result is that Good Samaritans who care for feral cats are punished. Existing leash and confinement laws should be enforced. Sterilization does NOT prevent roaming.
- There is no evidence to support the assertion that shelter intakes are caused by animals bred locally. Most puppies are sold outside of the local area where they are born.
- Mandated surgery disproportionately punishes low-income families.

We urge you to REJECT any mandatory sterilization ordinances and instead focus on measures proven to work over the past thirty years....aggressive public education campaigns, trap/neuter and release programs for feral cats, and low-cost voluntary sterilization clinics.

The CFoDC is also **OPPOSED to bans on retail sales of pets**, regardless of exemptions. Pet sales bans encourage the growth of a totally unregulated underground market. This ordinance would, in effect, trade a heavily regulated business for a largely unregulated industry, the pet rescue industry. A sales ban would only hurt legitimate businesses and responsible, regulated breeders and **do nothing to improve animal welfare.** If implemented, this sales ban will not directly provide a home for even **ONE shelter animal.**

Sales bans create a **shortage of desirable pets, a black market for dogs and cats, and a rise in imports from other countries.** Many "rescue" groups are already importing dogs from overseas to meet the demand for pets. This is happening right now in southern California. A rescue group in LA imports dogs and sells them for hundreds of dollars each. Per the "Dogs Without Borders" website: "We currently rescue most dogs from local shelters and strays, but sometimes we rescue dogs from as far away as Taiwan!....Some of the dogs you see on our site are not here in the States."

There is ample evidence collected by the LA County Veterinary Public Health Dept, the US Customs and Border Patrol, and the Centers for Disease Control proving that a high and rising number of dogs in the marketplace are being imported into the US for the rescue-shelter enterprise. **More than 10,000 dogs enter the US from Mexico each and every year.** Some dogs are imported for the rescue trade from as far away as Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

The practice of so-called "humane relocation" is not only outrageous, but is also very irresponsible on the part of the shelters/rescues that participate. There are diseases and parasites in other countries ~~which are transmitted from dog-to-dog or from dogs to humans which put the safety of our citizens~~ and our dog population at great risk. In late 2004, the first case of canine rabies in Los Angeles County in 30 years was confirmed. **The dog had recently come in from Mexico.** Rabies is a fatal disease that still claims over 50,000 human lives annually worldwide.

The demand for shelter dogs drives the importation of dogs for the rescue market niche. Helen Woodward Humane Society imports dogs on a regular basis from other states and even from other

countries as far away as Romania into San Diego County. Bans on animal sales exempting "rescues" would exacerbate the spread of disease.

Claims of high incidence of illness in pet store puppies are totally unsubstantiated. Pets bred under USDA rules and regulations receive regular veterinary care. There is evidence that the pet industry provides more veterinary care for puppies than the public at large. DVM/VPI Insurance Group, the largest provider of animal health insurance, testified during a hearing in California that "preconceived notions" concerning pet store puppies "could not have been more wrong." After insuring more than 89,000 pet store puppies and kittens and handling health claims from a pool of more than 500,000 insured animals, the insurance company reduced its premiums for pet store puppies and kittens substantially by as much as 22 percent compared to premiums charged for animals from other sources. Why? Pet store puppies receive more veterinary attention during the first 12 weeks of age than any other puppies and, as a result, have fewer claims.


California law provides consumer protection for pets purchased in pet stores; however, shelter and rescue animals are exempt from health, safety and disclosure requirements and from the consumer protection laws which are required of traditional pet stores and breeders under the Lockyer-Polanco-Farr Pet Protection Act and the Polanco-Lockyer Pet Breeder Warranty Act. **This proposed ordinance would eliminate consumer protection and would encourage the proliferation of unhealthy pets.**

While many rescue groups do good work, none of them are regulated. Some animal rescue groups raise the animals that they sell under poor conditions, the very conditions this ordinance seeks to eliminate. Just last January, dogs purchased from a Simi Valley rescue/shelter operation came down with parvo within days of purchase. This operation, like most of its counterparts, offers no warranty nor is it required to by law. Veterinary bills for the purchasers of these rescued pets ran into the thousands of dollars. Consumers have no recourse when they purchase a rescued pet with health problems and resultant big veterinary bills.

A recent study revealed that **less than 5% of dogs sourced from pet shops end up in an animal shelter.** Commercial breeders are a legitimate source for healthy, well-bred animals. Shelter and rescued animals are a different matter, with unknown health, temperament, parasites and infectious diseases.

We urge you to **reject** these proposals that would institute counterproductive mandatory sterilization, oppressive animal-related fees, and the prohibition of the retail sale of pets by replacing them with unregulated "rescue" animals.

Sincerely yours,



Geneva Coats, R.N.

Secretary

California Federation of Dog Clubs

CC: Robert Garcia, Suja Lowenthal, Lena Gonzales, Suzie Price, Patrick O'Donnell, Stacy Mungo, Dee Andrews, Roberto Uranga, Al Austin, Rex Richardson