



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB®

ORD-24 CORRESPONDENCE - Diane Amendola

March 10, 2015

Mayor Robert Garcia
Long Beach City Council
333 West Ocean Blvd, 14th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

Re: AKC Opposes Mandatory Spay/Neuter

Dear Mayor Garcia and Members of the Long Beach City Council:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) has previously written to you in opposition to the proposed mandatory spay/neuter ordinance. I am attaching copies of our previous communications for your reference.

AKC is now in receipt of a letter from Ms. Melanie Sobel, Director of Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter and we feel we must respond to some of the claims made in this letter.

Despite what Ms. Sobel's letter says, AKC's only communication with the Long Beach City Council has been the attached letters, neither of which references Santa Cruz. We have not made any statements at all concerning Santa Cruz Animal Shelter, their euthanasia or licensing rates.

In response to Ms. Sobel's claim that we oppose mandatory spay/neuter ordinances in order to protect our vested interest in the buying and selling of animals for profit we would like to point out that the AKC is a not-for-profit and we do not buy or sell animals. We are a registry service which maintains pedigrees in order to establish the purebred parentage of dogs registered with us. We also sanction events including conformation dog shows, field and agility trials and other companion and performance events that are sponsored by local kennel clubs.

Under the proposed ordinance most AKC dogs would be eligible for exemptions (as long as they were accepted by the Long Beach Animal Control Services Director). The reason we oppose this measure is because it is bad public policy and hurts animals and residents. This is the same reason that it is opposed by groups including the AVMA, ASPCA, No Kill Advocacy Center, and the American College of Theriogenologists. Certainly the ASPCA and the No Kill Advocacy Center are not groups which advocate on behalf of breeders, but rather are national humane organizations that have studied the effectiveness of mandatory spay/neuter laws and found them problematic.

The AKC supports the sterilization of animals adopted from shelters, which is required by California state law. We also strongly support programs that support voluntary spay/neuter and assist low-income residents by providing low-cost and no-cost options for sterilization. Our Spaying and Neutering Position Statement says, "The American Kennel Club encourages pet owners to spay or neuter their dogs as a responsible means to prevent accidental breedings resulting in unwanted puppies. The

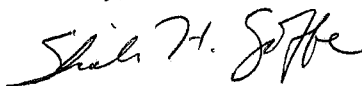
American Kennel Club encourages breeders to discuss spaying and neutering options with puppy buyers who do not wish to participate in conformation events.”

There is no consensus among veterinarians or animal behaviorists that leads to the conclusion that “sterilization improves a pet’s health and temperament.” A summary of some behavioral concerns regarding spay/neuter can be seen [here](#). Attached you will find a list of studies demonstrating the health concerns associated with early spay/neuter, which this ordinance would mandate by forcing the sterilization of dogs by six months of age.

Finally, we agree with Ms. Sobel’s statements that good laws and public education are the best way to change attitudes and promote responsible pet ownership and that changing people’s behavior is integral to reducing shelter populations. However, we do not believe that mandatory spay/neuter policies will do that. They are punitive, disrespectful of the rights of the individual and of cultural norms of certain groups and have never been proven to lower shelter intakes or euthanasia numbers.

We respectfully urge you to focus on enforceable laws that will address the problem of irresponsible ownership in your community for all pet owners. The American Kennel Club would welcome the opportunity to work with you to develop effective, responsible legislation that would address your concerns without restricting the rights of those who choose to be responsible owners of intact animals. Please do not hesitate to contact us at (919) 816-3720 or doglaw@akc.org if we can assist you in developing viable alternatives to mandatory spay/neuter policies.

Sincerely,



Sheila Goffe
Director, Government Relations