



Lawmakers mulling puppy prevention

New bill proposes spay/neuter law

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Last year, more than a half-million unwanted pets were euthanized in California, according the California Department of Health Services, but a proposed Healthy Pets Act aims to reduce those deaths.

Sponsored by Assemblyman Lloyd Levine, D-Van Nuys, Assembly Bill 1634 seeks to curb the overpopulation of pets by requiring that most be spayed or neutered.

“This bill benefits taxpayers because last year it cost state and local governments \$250 million to care for, house and euthanize all those animals,” Levine said. “And it benefits the animals because shelter workers do the best they can, but it’s not a loving home. It’s terrible for the animals (that don’t get adopted).”

The assembly bill, introduced late last month and still in an early draft, would require every dog and cat to be fixed by the age of four months, unless the animal is a pedigreed purebred or has a special permit from the state. Animals used for professional purposes, including guide dogs and trained police canines, are exempt.

The fee for an “intact permit” that would allow owners to breed their pets, would be determined by local jurisdictions, so it is unclear what the cost would ultimately be. However, the bill’s text states that the fee “shall be no more than what is reasonably necessary to fund the administration of that jurisdiction’s intact permit program.”

Pet owners who fail to meet the spay/neuter requirement could face fines of \$500, which would go toward local low-cost spay and neuter programs, Levine said.

Local animal control agencies will be responsible for enforcing and administering the law, should it go into effect.

“I would imagine that it would be an unfunded mandate that we will have to figure out how to enforce. We will just absorb the cost,” said Dan Olsen, animal control manager for the Town of Truckee. “It’s got such a long way to go, so we’re kind of in a wait-and-see mode.”

Santa Cruz County and Rhode Island already have similar laws on the books, and Arizona is considering a similar statute.

Spay and Neuter Assistance

The Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe and the Town of Truckee have partnered to promote the spaying and neutering of all dogs and cats in local communities. A subsidized program is available to help offset some of the costs associated with spay/neuter surgery so all pet owners can afford it.

The Community Spay/Neuter Program is open to permanent residents of Truckee, North Lake Tahoe and surrounding areas, who require financial assistance with sterilizing their pets. Pet owners pay a set fee (see below) and Humane Society, the Town of Truckee and veterinarians cover the rest of the expense. The fees are:

- Male cats: \$25

- Female cats: \$35
- Male dogs : \$40
- Female dogs: \$50

For more, visit www.townoftruckee.com/acspay.html

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