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ASSEMBLY PASSES CALIFORNIA HEALTHY PETS ACT

*Universal spaying and neutering of dogs and cats
will save taxpayers millions*

In a victory for California taxpayers and animal advocates, the California State Assembly today passed the California Healthy Pets Act (AB 1634). This bill, authored by Assemblymember Lloyd Levine (D – Van Nuys) would help keep pets healthy, make communities safer, and save taxpayers millions by requiring most pets to be spayed or neutered.

Every year, more than 800,000 pets are abandoned in California. California taxpayers spend \$250 million to house these abandoned cats and dogs in shelters and then euthanize the majority of them.

“Today is a great day for California’s taxpayers and animal lovers. The California Healthy Pets Act will save millions of dollars that are currently being used to shelter and euthanize unwanted animals. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to pass this common sense solution to the growing challenge of pet overpopulation in our state,” said Assemblymember Levine.

Sponsors of the California Healthy Pets Act include the California Veterinary Medical Association, California Animal Control Directors Association, and the State Humane Association of California, which represents local SPCAs and Humane Societies across the state. The bill is also supported by law enforcement agencies, elected officials, and hundreds of animal organizations from across the state.

“This is a monumental victory for anyone who cares about animals and every taxpayer in the state. The California Healthy Pets Act is the best, most humane option of reducing the growing number of unwanted animals. Status quo is not acceptable – we’ll never be able to keep up by just hoping that people do the right thing,” said Judie Mancuso, Campaign Director for the California Healthy Pets Coalition.

The California Healthy Pets Act would enact a universal spay/neuter law for California. More than 20 common sense exemptions are provided in the bill, 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 on a successful universal 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 percent, its shelter's intake numbers had plummeted by more than half. This success has inspired other jurisdictions, including the City of Sacramento and City of San Bernardino, to adopt similar measures.

Dog or cat owners found to be in violation of AB 1634 would be cited, but would not pay a fine if they had their animals spayed or neutered. All funds from permits 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.

For more information, please visit www.cahealthypets.com.

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