

Nine Reasons Why California Needs the Healthy Pets Act

- 1. Taxpayers are paying over \$250 million every year to shelter and euthanize pets, and every year we pay more.** Taxpayers are paying for the neglect and mistakes of irresponsible pet owners. With the availability of free or low-cost spay/neuter services, there's no reason why taxpayers should be footing the bill.
- 2. It's an urgent problem when nearly 1 million cats and dogs are taken in by our shelters every year and well over half are euthanized.** California's shelters are overflowing with abandoned pets. Government reports show that over 400,000 pets are euthanized each year, and when you consider the shelters not included in the reports, such as some SPCA shelters, the actual number is much higher.
- 3. Mandatory spay/neuter laws are a common-sense solution with a record of success.** Spay/neuter laws are on the books and working in several jurisdictions in California, including San Mateo, Lake, Santa Cruz and Stanislaus counties. Rhode Island passed a state law in 2006 that is widely considered a success, and the city of San Bernardino just adopted a spay/neuter law. Shelter populations in Santa Cruz County dropped by 50% after a spay/neuter law was adopted.
- 4. Abandoned and aggressive dogs endanger our neighborhoods.** California has more dog bites per capita than any other state – almost 30,000 bites reported just in 2006 – and that's just the dog bites reported to authorities or health care professionals. Unaltered dogs are three times as likely to attack, and a majority of dog bite victims are children.
- 5. The laws on the books aren't working.** Voluntary spay/neuter laws aren't working. Despite the broad availability of free or low-cost spay/neuter services and extensive public education efforts, nearly 1 million unwanted dogs and cats end up in state shelters, with many more in private shelters.
- 6. Free or low-cost spay/neuter services are widely available.** Cities and counties throughout the state offer free or low-cost spay/neuter services. In addition, nonprofit organizations such as local Humane Societies often provide free spaying and neutering. In most counties, these clinics are underutilized.
- 7. Pets that have been spayed or neutered are healthier.** Studies by the American Veterinary Medical Association show that spayed or neutered pets develop fewer health problems, including lower risk of cancer, tumors, cysts and infections. Spayed or neutered pets also live longer, healthier lives.
- 8. Overcrowded shelters make it difficult to recruit trained and caring workers.** Many cities and counties cannot fill open positions for veterinarians and other workers because of crowded shelter conditions and the emotional toll from the deaths of a high percentage of sheltered animals.
- 9. It's the right thing to do.** Spay/neuter laws are the humane solution to the massive overpopulation crisis in our shelters. Bringing kittens and puppies into the world, only to abandon them to shelters and then death, just isn't right.