

SFGate.com**LA Council votes for pet sterilization law urged by Bob Barker**

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(02-01) 18:30 PST Los Angeles (AP) --

Urged on by retired "The Price is Right" host Bob Barker and a throng of supporters, the City Council on Friday tentatively approved an ordinance that would require spaying and neutering of pet cats and dogs by 4 months of age, with some exceptions.

So much applause erupted when Barker stood to endorse the idea that council President Eric Garcetti urged just a quick clap because time for public comment was limited.

Barker replied: "Councilman Garcetti, that's the most beautiful sound I've heard in months since I left 'Price is Right.'"

Barker noted that for decades he closed his show by urging viewers to help control the pet population and that the audience was filled with people who had worked on the problem for years.

"Now I'd like to think that all of us working together have made a difference," he said. "But it's not enough, and the only answer is legislation. And to be more specific, the only answer is this ordinance."

Barker said 4 months is important because animals can breed at very young ages, but he noted that under the law it would only take a letter from a veterinarian to delay surgery to 5 or 6 months of age.

Other advocates said the law would have plenty of exceptions, including for licensed breeders and show animals. A series of opponents spoke against the proposal.

Minus four members, the council voted 10-1 in favor of the ordinance, prompting a sustained ovation from the overflow crowd at the council's San Fernando Valley chamber.

The council president cautioned that an ordinance requires 12 votes on first reading, but on a second reading set for next week it will only require a simple majority.

"I've not seen one overturned in my time ... but just to let you know that's when it will be official should the vote be upheld," he said.

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