



LEAGUE OF
CALIFORNIA
CITIES



April 4, 2023

The Honorable Marc Berman
Chair, Committee on Business and Professions
Legislative Office Building, Room 379
Sacramento, California 95814

**RE: AB 595 (Essayli): 72-Hour Public Notice of Euthanasia at Animal Shelters
OPPOSE – As Amended March 21, 2023**

Dear Assembly Member Berman,

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Urban Counties of California (UCC), the League of California Cities (Cal Cities), and the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) we write to respectfully oppose AB 595, Assembly Member Bill Essayli's measure that would require all animal shelters provide online public notice at least 72 hours before euthanizing any animal. While we agree that euthanasia should only be used as a last resort, AB 595 will not resolve any of the underlying issues that lead to euthanasia. Instead, it will exacerbate shelter overcrowding, creating an unfunded mandate by increasing holding times for animals in shelters and costing valuable resources shelters could otherwise use to help the animals in their care.

AB 595 will require shelters to make significant changes to their current processes in ways that run counter to long-standing best practices in shelter management. Currently, shelters can operate at capacity and only end up euthanizing as a last resort in emergent situations. When shelters are presented with new animals they are statutorily required to admit, such as owned strays, victims of hoarding or animal abuse, or animals that require temporary safe keeping when owners are arrested or hospitalized, staff must find ways to make space for all of these animals within their limited capacity. In order to meet the 72-hour requirement in this bill, shelters may end up needing to euthanize animals sooner than they otherwise would have to ensure there is space to accommodate new animals when they arrive, which is obviously an undesirable outcome.

Additionally, the criminal provisions for failure to provide timely public notice will lead to serious consequences for shelter staff, the very individuals who have dedicated their lives to saving animals. Shelters are already experiencing staffing challenges and AB 595 will only lead

to increased staff shortages in animal shelters that are already stretched thin. In a scenario where internet connectivity is somehow disrupted (for example, during a wildfire or flood), leading to a failure to provide timely notice, staff could be cited for a misdemeanor.

There is no direct state or federal funding to support local animal shelters, leaving shelter staff to make the most with what few resources they have. This is especially true in under-resourced areas of our state where animal shelters see higher animal intake per capita, fewer adoptions, and staffing challenges. These shelters serve residents who are often already struggling with larger issues, like housing and income insecurity, that increase the likelihood that pets need to be surrendered.

Many animal shelters in California are over capacity, understaffed, and underfunded; the added costs, stress on capacity, and criminalization of staff outlined in AB 595 will only serve to exacerbate shelters' operational limitations. We support and encourage the bill's provisions to evaluate California's sheltering system, which we hope would lead to increased understanding and support for animal shelters across the state. Unfortunately, the rest of the bill, while well-intentioned, will not serve to help the animals most in need. For these reasons, we must oppose AB 595.

Sincerely,



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cc: The Honorable Bill Essayli, California State Assembly
Honorable Members & Staff, Assembly Committee on Business and Professions
Bill Lewis, Assembly Republican Caucus