



To: State and Federal Legislation Committee, New York City Council
From: Catherine Beason, President, Animal Friendly NYC
Date: May 20, 2009

Memorandum in Support of SLR to pass A6158 and S4278 NYC Animal Population Control Program and Fund

Animal Friendly NYC would greatly appreciate your support for Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal's and Senator Tom Duane's bill – **A6158** and **S4278** -- which will create low-cost spay and neuter clinics for low-income pet owners in New York City.

The bill would allow the city to set up its own low-cost spay and neuter program using money from a license surcharge on intact dogs. There's been a state program since 1997, but it's never worked well in New York City. It's a veterinary-reimbursement program, and very few New York City vets participate. **For example, in the last fiscal year, only 144 surgeries were performed under the state program in New York City.**

This bill will dramatically increase the number of surgeries and reduce the cost per surgery. The 144 state-program surgeries performed in FY 2008/2009 cost the state an average \$166 per surgery. A clinic can perform the surgeries at an average subsidy of \$65.

Significantly, the bill has the **support of the city Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**, which oversees the city's animal shelters and would oversee this program. And it has the **support of the state Department of Agriculture and Markets**, which administers the current state program.

In the last six years, New York City has struggled to reduce the number of homeless cats and dogs euthanized each year. The heroic efforts of the city's rescue and adoption community have managed to more than double the number of cats and dogs adopted out, saving many pets from death. However, the number of animals entering the city's shelters has stayed stubbornly at about 40,000.

Here's a startling set of numbers taken from NYC Animal Care and Control's own statistics:

Shelter Intake 2002:	40,968	Adoptions 2002:	8,678
Shelter Intake 2008:	40,235	Adoptions 2008:	22,112

Unfortunately, increasing adoptions doesn't solve the problem of homeless pets. We know from successful programs in other states that **offering low-cost spay and neuter to low-income pet owners is the only way to significantly reduce shelter intake**. That's because the cost of spaying and neutering is out of reach for many pet owners, and when pets reach sexual maturity or have litters, their owners often abandon them.

That's not only tragic for the animals who are abandoned. It's also expensive for the city. It costs about \$200 to take an animal into the city's shelters, whether that animal ends up adopted or dead. A subsidized surgery costs roughly \$65 when delivered in a clinic setting and not only keeps that animal in his or her home, but also keeps potential offspring out of the city's shelters.

For the last four years, Animal Friendly NYC has been working with state and city legislators and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to create low-cost clinics in each of the city's five boroughs. This bill would provide a good financial footing to get the first of those clinics off the ground.

Thank you for your time and attention.



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Director
State Legislative Affairs

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MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE A.6158-A-- by M. of A. Rosenthal --Agriculture Committee
S.4278 - by Senator Duane -- Agriculture Committee

TITLE **AN ACT** to amend the agriculture and market law and the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing a New York City animal population control program and an animal population control fund; and to amend Chapter 115 of the laws of the 1894 relating to the better protection of lost and strayed animals and for securing the rights of owners thereof, in relation to licensing fees

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

The legislation would implement an Animal Population Control Program, in an effort to prevent the euthanasia of healthy animals and reduce the cost to the city of sheltering unwanted stray dogs and cats before they enter the shelter system. The program will reduce the population of unwanted dogs and cats by encouraging NYC residents who own cats and dogs to have them spayed or neutered by providing low-cost spaying and neutering services to such owners. The legislation would also establish an Animal Population Control Fund.

REASONS FOR SUPPORT

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) contracts with New York City Animal Care and Control (AC&C) to provide animal services. Last year, AC&C conducted low cost/free spay/neuter services two days per week for the public, one day in the Bronx and one day in Brooklyn, with the use of their mobile spay/neuter clinic. This was separate from their mandate to alter dogs and cats leaving the shelters. As grant funds sustaining the initiative were exhausted, AC&C's direct spay/neuter services were eliminated as projected losses would have been over \$100,000/year in the absence of grant funding. Currently, AC&C relies on partnerships with other entities such as the Toby Project and the ASPCA to cover previously offered services to the Bronx and Brooklyn.

The Animal Control Fund was established in conjunction with the creation of the New York State Animal Population Control Program in 1995 allocating \$3 from every unaltered dog license fee. However, due to the requirement that only private veterinarians be eligible for reimbursement, the fund has not been utilized efficiently in NYC.

This bill would establish a NYC Animal Population Control Program to be funded by the newly established NYC Animal Population Control Fund. The Fund will utilize the accrued funding, as well as future fees collected from unaltered dog license fees. With the support of the Fund, DOHMH and AC&C would be able to reestablish and expand mobile clinic operations to provide more than 15,000 spay/neuter operations over six years using sustainable funding streams that are currently unavailable to DOHMH for these purposes. The creation of the Animal Population Control Program and the access to the Fund will allow for responsible and humane care necessary for the animals in New York City.

Accordingly, the Mayor urges the earliest possible favorable consideration of this proposal by the Legislature.

Respectfully submitted,

MICHELLE L. GOLDSTEIN
Director

MD:dgb
S:A6158A-09
5/6/09

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/20/2009

Name: Chris Manning (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Dept of Health & Mental Hygiene

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

In support of: 54278 A6158-A Date: 5-20-09

Name: Michelle Villagomez (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 520 8th Ave 7 Fl NY NY 10018

I represent: ASPCA

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆