



**PET INDUSTRY JOINT
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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February 17, 2016

Los Angeles City Council
Room 340, City Hall
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Members of the City Council,

My name is Mike Bober, and I am writing today on behalf of the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council to express our opposition to an outright repeal of the sunset clause included in section 53.73 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code. We believe that circumstances warrant a one-year extension of the sunset clause to allow for further study and would formally ask you to consider such an alternative at this time.

As the country's largest pet trade association representing the interests of all segments of the pet industry throughout the United States, PIJAC counts among its members national associations, organizations, corporations and individuals involved in the commercial pet trade. More specifically, PIJAC represents the interests of pet stores, distributors, pet supply manufacturers, breeders, retailers and pet owners throughout California and across the United States.

It is our contention that there are three reasons why an outright repeal of the sunset clause is inappropriate at this time. They include the failure of the ordinance to achieve its explicit objectives, the emergence of unintended consequences and the complications caused by interrelated issues currently under consideration by the Council. We hope you will agree that these factors warrant further attention before repealing the sunset clause altogether.

Failure to Achieve Objectives

When your Council passed this sales ban ordinance in 2012, you did so with two stated goals: "lower the City's shelter animal euthanasia rate and lead to a greater adoption rate of shelter animals." You were cautiously optimistic, stating in the ordinance that you thought this ban *may* have these effects.

These goals, though admirable, have not materialized to anywhere near the extent necessary to warrant the permanent extension of this sales ban. Euthanasia rates have remained high, with almost half (49%) of all animals entering the shelter system being put down in FY 2013-2014 and FY 2014-2015. At the same time, adoption rates (including both Animal Care and Control and partners) have held steady at 43%.

Emergence of Unintended Consequences

In passing this sales ban ordinance, your Council expressed a belief that it would be easy and profitable for pet stores to transition to a "humane model" in which they provided an outlet for the sale of dogs relinquished to Animal Care and Control. In some cases, this model simply proved unworkable, resulting in multiple store closings despite your assertion that this ordinance would not lead to such events.

Additionally, stores that *are* attempting to make this new model work are finding themselves subject to zoning restrictions that limit the number of adult dogs that can be

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Mike Bober

kept in a commercial establishment before being required to license as a kennel. This added requirement, complete with its own set of costs and regulations, has discouraged some who otherwise might have embraced the intent of the ordinance more fully.

Ongoing Interrelated Issues under Consideration by the Council

The city's retail pet sale ban does not exist in a vacuum, as seen in the meeting of the Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee earlier this month. In addition to this proposal (11-0754-S3), the Committee heard testimony on and ultimately recommended out an additional proposal (11-0754) to modify the definition of "kennel" to exclude pet shops.

They also considered another proposal (16-0056) which was continued for consideration for 30 days. This is important, as this motion would direct the Department of Animal Services to compile data gathered over the past five years to address "the growing influx of animal surrenders." If the city believes there to be such an influx, then it should delay repeal of the sunset clause until such time as a thorough review of the issue can be conducted.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit our comments and fervently hope that you will consider an extension of the sunset clause in lieu of outright repeal to allow this decision to be made based on hard data. We would be happy to work with you on this in whatever capacity you see fit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Bober", is written over a horizontal line.

Mike Bober
President & CEO, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council