

Communication from Public

Name: Zoey Knittel, Shelter Spay Neuter Clinic Operator Collective

Date Submitted: 02/21/2025 07:41 PM

Council File No: 23-0452

Comments for Public Posting: February 21, 2025 To the Arts, Park, Libraries, and Community Enrichment Committee: We, the undersigned organizations and veterinarians who serve as Los Angeles' City spay/neuter providers, write to you to emphasize the urgent need to increase the reimbursement rates for the spay and neuter voucher program in the City of Los Angeles (the City). These vouchers are essential for the sterilization of shelter animals, owned cats and dogs and community cats, and play a critical role in controlling shelter overcrowding and easing the public and shelter backlog in spay/neuter demand. A long-overdue increase in the dollar value of City spay/neuter vouchers would increase the number of veterinarians willing to accept the vouchers. Currently only 29 veterinary clinics accept the "Free" vouchers—a significant drop from 85 veterinarians in 2015. The reimbursement rates have not been adjusted since August 2015, when the Board of Animal Services Commission last passed an increase which was implemented. These outdated rates no longer align with current service costs, which have significantly increased over the past decade, especially salaries and drug costs. The financial gap between the reimbursement rates and clinics' cost of surgery limits the number of veterinarians who can afford to participate. In 2024, the City budget included an increase in the spay/neuter voucher reimbursement rates based on the breakeven cost of surgery calculated from a fee study survey of shelter clinic providers conducted in 2022. However, this increase is still awaiting implementation. A recent proposal from the office of the CAO to incrementally implement rates lower than initially proposed, over multiple years, would mean that by the time those decreased rates are in place, they will already be 3 – 6 years out of date. Without the full implementation of the 2024 budget's voucher rate increase, the City will continue to experience a vicious cycle: families unable to afford to spay or neuter their animals, veterinarians unable to afford to accept City vouchers, and thousands of shelter animals euthanized due to spay/neuter shortages. By approving the voucher increase, you would play a key role in driving immediate, positive change for animal welfare in our City. More veterinarians would be able to participate in the voucher program and the City would assist more families in need. Together, we can make a direct impact on animal welfare and the

well-being of pets and families across Los Angeles. In partnership and gratitude, - CAMP (Harbor Shelter, Northeast Valley Shelter, Jefferson Park Shelter) Dr. Elaine Lukic, DVM; Dr. Zach Deegan, DVM; Dr. Jennifer Artinian, DVM - CAMP veterinarians - CAMP Wellness Waggin' (mobile spay/neuter serving North Central Shelter, East Valley Shelter, West Valley Shelter) - Shelter Vet (West LA Shelter); Dr. Doron Vardi, DVM - Heaven On Earth Spay Neuter Clinic (West Valley Shelter); Dr. Nicole Petschauer, DVM - Dr. David Forster, DVM, Director of WesternU Spay and Neuter Center North Central Animal Shelter - Dr. David Clark, DVM, Director of Clinical Services CVM, WesternU - Dr. Casey Connors, DVM - FixNation - Spay4LA - Best Friends Animal Society - Greater Los Angeles Animal Spay Neuter Collaborative - Latino Alliance for Animal Care Foundation - Paws For Life - Kitty Bungalow - Peter Zippi Memorial Fund - Better Together Forever - Tipped Ears - Pals N Pets - Purrfect Partners - LA Rabbit Foundation

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Without the full implementation of the 2024 budget's voucher rate increase, the City will continue to experience a vicious cycle: families unable to afford to spay or neuter their animals, veterinarians unable to afford to accept City vouchers, and thousands of shelter animals euthanized due to spay/neuter shortages.

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