

Communication from Public

Name: PATTI STRAND

Date Submitted: 09/26/2023 04:10 PM

Council File No: 23-1008

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Council Chair Hernandez, and Councilmembers Lee, Hutt, and Villanueva: First, please accept my apology for sending this letter to you so late. I have attached it to this email as well as pasting it in. Thank you for your consideration. We're here to help. I am writing on behalf of the National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA) and our Los Angeles members. NAIA was founded in 1991 as a national animal welfare organization dedicated to providing evidence-based solutions to complex and controversial issues regarding animals. Our group works to improve the health and wellbeing of animals, to preserve the human-animal bond and to protect the basic civil rights of people who live and work with animals. Our membership represents a diverse cross section of society, including animal hobbyists and businesses, agriculture, animal scientists, shelter personnel, veterinarians and animal lawyers. Our unique subject-matter expertise is recognized nationwide and the scientific studies we've conducted are widely cited. There are no simple answers to the animal sheltering problems that Los Angeles is experiencing. However, there are numerous issues to consider in order to reduce current problems and begin solving long-term problems. Here are several major well-documented issues to consider as you work to reduce the number of dogs in California shelters and associated problems:

- Stray dogs: After decades of steady declines in the total number of dogs entering LA County shelters, from 2021-2023 the total number of dogs received by LA County mushroomed from 10,469 to 18,315 for a total increase of 7,846. During the same period, the number of stray dogs impounded in LA County grew from 7,122 to 12,677, an increase of 5,555, representing 71% of the total increase. Please see the following graph, which was made using data provided publicly by the city shelters in L A county. Click on the comment section for more detailed information on the source of LA shelter dogs. <https://shelterproject.naiaonline.org/shelters/data/CA/3917>
- Owner relinquishments represented about 16% of the increase during the same period. Clearly, the negative impacts of the last few years, such as COVID, increased homelessness and others have dulled the momentum of programs that were previously working in LA County. Although many factors are at play and there is no silver bullet, focusing on reducing stray dogs is key to any long-term success and to regaining the momentum lost during the last few years. In warm weather climates, stray dogs exacerbate animal shelter populations, public health and safety problems and related animal welfare issues. LA County has always been home to a large population of stray dogs and cats. NAIA is familiar with successful programs used to reduce stray dog populations and would be happy to assist the city in its efforts to reduce the stray dog populations and related problems.
- A shortage of veterinarians and vet techs: The lack of veterinarians and vet techs in California shelters is a major reason for

overcrowding of California shelters. National Animal Interest Alliance
1017 SW Morrison, Ste 511-512, Portland OR 97205 503-227-8450
naia@naiaonline.org Since COVID, California shelters have suffered a
critical shortage of veterinarians and vet techs. Basic care like
vaccinations, dewormings, treating sick pets, and even euthanasia have to
be postponed. In addition to the basic intake requirements, California law
requires that shelter/rescue pets must be neutered before adoption. This
staffing deficiency reduces pet turnover, assuring that the number of pets
in shelters will continue to increase. According to a survey of 230
California animal welfare organizations in the URL below, "... nearly
80% of respondents identify that increased length of stay results from
inadequate access to vet care; this increases the costs to house animals,
strongly contributes to behavioral degeneration, and increases the number
of animals that staff need to care for at any given time." Please read the
survey below:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5ae46f84f8c3438d9c32126d54681936>

<https://www.calanimals.org/post/statewide-veterinary-shortage> • Rescue
relocation programs: Another cause of shelter overcrowding is the increase
in transport rescues operating in the Los Angeles area. These are
unregulated rescue and sheltering operations that import dogs from other
states and/or countries in order to have dogs available to adopt out. They
operate as nonprofit pet stores adopting/selling their recently acquired
dogs. They often place dogs with significant health and behavior risk
factors. It's a huge business that is largely unregulated. This is a national
issue. Some states have begun regulating shelters and rescues to restrict
this sort of activity. Public shelters are rarely engaged in this practice but
many private shelters are. I will follow this up with the rest of the letter.



September 26, 2023

Dear Councilmembers:

I am writing on behalf of the National Animal Interest Alliance (NAIA) and our Los Angeles members. NAIA was founded in 1991 as a national animal welfare organization dedicated to providing evidence-based solutions to complex and controversial issues regarding animals. Our group works to improve the health and wellbeing of animals, to preserve the human-animal bond and to protect the basic civil rights of people who live and work with animals.

Our membership represents a diverse cross section of society, including animal hobbyists and businesses, agriculture, animal scientists, shelter personnel, veterinarians and animal lawyers. Our unique subject-matter expertise is recognized nationwide and the scientific studies we've conducted are widely cited.

There are no simple answers to the animal sheltering problems that Los Angeles is experiencing. However, there are numerous issues to consider in order to reduce current problems and begin solving long-term problems. Here are several major well-documented issues to consider as you work to reduce the number of dogs in California shelters and associated problems:

- **Stray dogs:** After decades of steady declines in the total number of dogs entering LA County shelters, from 2021-2023 the total number of dogs received by LA County mushroomed from 10,469 to 18,315 for a total increase of 7,846. **During the same period, the number of stray dogs impounded in LA County grew from 7,1222 to 12677, an increase of 5,555, representing 71% of the total increase.** Please see the following graph, which was made using data provided publicly by the city shelters in L A county. Click on the comment section for more detailed information on the source of LA shelter dogs. <https://shelterproject.naiaonline.org/shelters/data/CA/3917> Owner relinquishments represented about 16% of the increase during the same period.

Clearly, the negative impacts of the last few years, such as COVID, increased homelessness and others have dulled the momentum of programs that were previously working in LA County. Although many factors are at play and there is no silver bullet, focusing on reducing stray dogs is key to any long-term success and to regaining the momentum lost during the last few years.

In warm weather climates, stray dogs exacerbate animal shelter populations, public health and safety problems and related animal welfare issues. LA County has always been home to a large population of stray dogs and cats. NAIA is familiar with successful programs used to reduce stray dog populations and would be happy to assist the city in its efforts to reduce the stray dog populations and related problems.

- **A shortage of veterinarians and vet techs:** The lack of veterinarians and vet techs in California shelters is a major reason for overcrowding of California shelters.

Since COVID, California shelters have suffered a critical shortage of veterinarians and vet techs. Basic care like vaccinations, dewormings, treating sick pets, and even euthanasia have to be postponed. In addition to the basic intake requirements, California law requires that shelter/rescue pets must be neutered before adoption. This staffing deficiency reduces pet turnover, assuring that the number of pets in shelters will continue to increase. According to a survey of 230 California animal welfare organizations in the URL below, "... nearly 80% of respondents identify that increased length of stay results from inadequate access to vet care; this increases the costs to house animals, strongly contributes to behavioral degeneration, and increases the number of animals that staff need to care for at any given time." Please read the survey below:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5ae46f84f8c3438d9c32126d54681936>

<https://www.calanimals.org/post/statewide-veterinary-shortage>

- **Rescue relocation programs:** Another cause of shelter overcrowding is the increase in transport rescues operating in the Los Angeles area. These are unregulated rescue and sheltering operations that import dogs from other states and/or countries in order to have dogs available to adopt out. They operate as nonprofit pet stores adopting/selling their recently acquired dogs. They often place dogs with significant health and behavior risk factors. It's a huge business that is largely unregulated. This is a national issue. Some states have begun regulating shelters and rescues to restrict this sort of activity. Public shelters are rarely engaged in this practice but many private shelters are. In addition to the health and welfare problems associated with the mass movement of unvetted, unregulated dogs, this practice creates a tax burden for the receiving jurisdiction. When CDC looked at the scope of the international dog imports in 2019, they found that over a million dogs were being imported into the US each year. The number entering the US from the southern border was over 242,000. See their chart here:
<https://www.naiaonline.org/uploads/WhitePapers/CDC-FedRegJan2019Citation.pdf>.
USDA and CDC have raised concern about these issues. Both have initiated rule-making proposals in recent months.
- **Breeder Licensing:** Breeder licensing needs to include reasonable criteria and must have effective enforcement mechanisms to ensure that the licensing requirements are met. Without reasonable criteria, breeder licensing encourages the production of dogs that the owners cannot responsibly care for or place. Puppies and kittens produced by individuals who lack the husbandry knowledge and/or personal resources to make the necessary commitments to their pets and to their responsible placement, generate far higher owner relinquishment rates.

If we can help you as you work to improve the current shelter situation in Los Angeles, please call on us. We have hands-on subject matter expertise in pet population dynamics and animal welfare issues and would be happy to assist in any way possible.

Thank you,



Patti Strand
NAIA President

Communication from Public

Name: Randi Chylinski
Date Submitted: 09/26/2023 09:37 AM
Council File No: 23-1008

Comments for Public Posting: To whom it may concern, For the items addressed on 9/26 and 9/27, I, Randi Chylinski, Los Angeles Resident STRONGLY OPPOSE the proposal that could lead to a suspension of new breeder permits for LA city residents. The benefits of local and responsible breeders encourage purpose-bred animals who are health tested, temperament tested and proven worthy of reproducing - amongst various other things. They are a very strong part of the animal community in terms of being responsible with their actions. These responsible owners of intact animals are not the reason for shelter population concerns as there are very strict protocols in place for if an animal is no longer to be cared for by their owner when bred by a reputable breeder. For example, a common initiative is that the animal will always going back to the breeder no matter WHAT if the owner becomes sick or moves and cannot take the animal with them. These homes are thoroughly vetted in the first place, long before the animals are born, and relationships are established to make sure the animals will be in the best care for the duration of their lifetime. Please consider obtaining and researching accurate data on the reasons for animals coming into the shelter. Please focus on low-cost spay/neuter and other initiatives to address concerns. These issues of overpopulation could be drastically cut in half by educating the public on why it is important to do your research on reputable breeders and why not every animal should be bred. Thank you, Randi Chylinski