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**KAREN BASS
MAYOR**

**DEPARTMENT OF
ANIMAL SERVICES**

221 N. Figueroa Street
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ANNETTE G. RAMIREZ
INTERIM GENERAL MANAGER

CURTIS R. WATTS
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER
Administration

DR. JEREMY PRUPAS
CHIEF VETERINARIAN

May 15, 2026

The Honorable Karen Bass
Mayor, City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street, Room 303
Los Angeles, CA 90012

The Honorable City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: Thomas Arechiga, Office of the Mayor

**RE: APPROVAL OF STATEMENT OF SUPPORT LETTER TO THE CITY COUNCIL
REGARDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 PROPOSED
BUDGET**

Recommendation for Council Action, subject to the approval of the Mayor:

1. **APPROVE** the statement of support letter directed to the City Council's Budget and Finance Committee regarding the Department of Animal Services Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget, attached to this Transmittal as Attachment 2; and,
2. **FORWARD** the acceptance of this transmittal to the Mayor and City Council for approval.

SUMMARY:

The Mayor's Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget was released on April 20, 2026. The Department of Animal Services' budget hearing before the Budget and Finance committee was held on April 29, 2026. The interim General Manager submitted a written communication to the Committee on April 21, 2026, outlining the operational impacts of the Proposed Budget, including the elimination of positions, reduction of animal medical supplies and food accounts, elimination of the Dogs Playing For Life canine enrichment contract, and a structural shortfall in Spay and Neuter Program funding.

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SUBJECT: Transmittal to Mayor and Council
APPROVAL OF STATEMENT OF SUPPORT LETTER TO THE CITY COUNCIL REGARDING THE
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 PROPOSED BUDGET

At a Board meeting on April 28, 2026, the Board expressed interest in submitting a letter to the City Council requesting restoration of critical funding for the Department of Animal Services in the Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget, and asked staff to provide the Board with a proposed draft of the letter.

A proposed letter titled "Statement of Support – Department of Animal Services Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget" is attached to this Transmittal as Attachment 2. On May 12, 2026, the Board of Animal Services Commissioners authorized the approval of this "Statement of Support – Department of Animal Services Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget" letter, subject to the approval of the City Council and Mayor.

The letter urges the restoration of funding in four critical areas:

1. Restoration of three eliminated positions: Animal Control Officer, Animal Care Technician Supervisor, and Animal Care Technician; and
2. Full funding for the Dogs Playing For Life canine enrichment contract for its third and final year; and
3. Restoration of the Animal Medical Supplies Account and Animal Food/Feed and Grain Account to operational levels; and
4. Full funding for the Spay and Neuter Special Purpose Fund at the requested level of \$6,516,196.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed Support Letter requests the City Council to restore critical funding to prevent elimination of staff positions, fully fund the Department's contract with Dogs Playing For Life to continue out-of-kennel enrichment for dogs, restore budgets for animal food and medical supplies, and fully fund the spay and neuter program.

Respectfully submitted,



Annette G. Ramirez
Interim General Manager

Attachment 1: Adopted Board Report – Approval of Statement of Support Letter to the City Council Regarding the Department of Animal Services Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget

Attachment 2: Letter: Statement of Support – Department of Animal Services Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget

cc: Jacqueline Reyes, City Administrative Officer
Sharon Lee, Los Angeles Animal Services

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REPORT TO THE BOARD OF ANIMAL SERVICES COMMISSIONERS

Report No. 26-014

MEETING DATE: May 12, 2026

PREPARED BY: Annette Ramirez

REPORT DATE: May 8, 2026

TITLE: Interim General Manager

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF STATEMENT OF SUPPORT LETTER TO THE CITY COUNCIL REGARDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 PROPOSED BUDGET

BOARD ACTION RECOMMENDED:

1. **APPROVE** a Statement of Support Letter directed to the City Council's Budget and Finance Committee regarding the Department of Animal Services Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget, attached to this Report as Attachment 1;
2. **DIRECT** Department staff to transmit the Statement of Support Letter to all members of the City Council Budget and Finance Committee and to the relevant City Council File.

SUMMARY:

The Mayor's Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget was released on April 20, 2026. The Department of Animal Services' budget hearing before the Budget and Finance Committee was held on April 29, 2026. The Interim General Manager submitted a written communication to the Committee on April 21, 2026, outlining the operational impacts of the Proposed Budget, including the elimination of positions, reductions to animal medical supplies and food accounts, elimination of the Dogs Playing for Life canine enrichment contract, and a structural shortfall in Spay and Neuter Program funding.

At a meeting on April 28, 2026, this Board expressed interest in submitting a letter to the City Council requesting restoration of critical funding for the Department of Animal Services in the Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget, and asked staff to provide the Board with a proposed draft of the letter.

A proposed letter titled "Statement of Support – Department of Animal Services Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget" is attached to this Report as Attachment 1 for the Board's consideration and approval. The letter urges the restoration of funding in four critical areas:

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Report to the Board of Animal Services Commissioners

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF STATEMENT OF SUPPORT LETTER TO THE CITY COUNCIL REGARDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 PROPOSED BUDGET

1. Restoration of three eliminated positions: Animal Control Officer, Animal Care Technician Supervisor, and Animal Care Technician;
2. Full funding for the Dogs Playing for Life canine enrichment contract for its third and final year;
3. Restoration of the Animal Medical Supplies Account and Animal Food/Feed and Grain Account to operational levels; and
4. Full funding for the Spay and Neuter Special Purpose Fund at the requested level of \$6,516,196.

The Department's Interim General Manager strongly recommends that the Board adopt the proposed letter for immediate transmittal to the City Council's Budget and Finance Committee.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed Support Letter requests the City Council to restore critical funding to prevent elimination of staff positions, fully fund the Department's contract with Dogs Playing for Life to continue out-of-kennel enrichment for dogs, restore budgets for animal food and medical supplies, and fully fund the spay and neuter program.

Approved:



Annette G. Ramirez, Interim General Manager

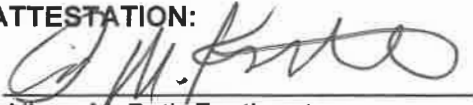
Attachment 1 – Letter: Statement of Support – Department of Animal Services Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget

BOARD ACTION:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approved	Disapproved	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved with noted modifications	Continued	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tabled	New Date	<input type="checkbox"/>

Report to the Board of Animal Services Commissioners
SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF STATEMENT OF SUPPORT LETTER TO THE CITY COUNCIL
REGARDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 PROPOSED
BUDGET

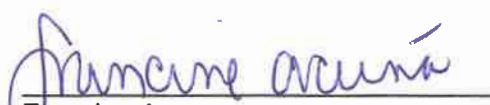
ATTESTATION:



Alison McBeth-Featherstone
President



Olivia E. Garcia
Vice-President



Francine Acuna
Secretary to the Board

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CHIEF VETERINARIAN

May 12, 2026

The Honorable Katy Yaroslavsky, Chair

Budget and Finance Committee

City of Los Angeles

200 North Spring Street

Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: STATEMENT OF SUPPORT -- DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 PROPOSED BUDGET

Dear Councilmember Yaroslavsky and Members of the Budget and Finance Committee:

On behalf of the Board of Animal Services Commissioners, we write to express our strong support for the Department of Animal Services and to respectfully urge the Budget and Finance Committee to restore critical funding that has been eliminated or reduced in the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2026-27 Proposed Budget. We are grateful for this Committee's dedication to the City's fiscal health and for your willingness to hear the needs of the Department. The issues outlined below are not incremental; they are foundational to the Department's ability to operate safely, humanely, and in service of our communities.

I. Restoration of Three Eliminated Positions

The Board strongly urges the Committee to restore the following three positions that have been eliminated in the Proposed Budget:

- **Animal Control Officer (ACO)**
- **Animal Care Technician Supervisor**
- **Animal Care Technician (ACT)**

These are not redundant or administrative roles. They represent the operational backbone of the Department's daily work; the staff who respond to community service calls, manage animal behavior, provide direct care, and maintain the safety of our facilities and community.

This proposed budget comes on the heels of the elimination of seven ACO positions in FY 2025-26 and twelve ACO positions in FY 2024-25. The Department currently holds only 49 ACO position authorities to serve a population of over four million residents. Further reductions will critically impair our capacity to respond to emergencies, enforce animal control laws, and protect public safety.

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Of particular concern is the elimination of the Animal Care Technician Supervisor at the Harbor Shelter, which would leave that facility with a single supervisor. This creates an unacceptable gap in operational oversight and directly impacts both staff effectiveness and the standard of care provided to animals. The Board respectfully urges the Committee to restore all three positions.

The Animal Care Technician position is a basic operational necessity and must be restored. ACTs are the backbone of daily shelter life, they are the staff who feed, water, clean, and monitor the animals in our care every single day. They are also the face of the Department to the public, providing direct customer service to the visitors, adopters, and community members who walk through our shelter doors. Without adequate ACT staffing, the quality of daily animal care suffers, wait times for the public increase, and the burden on remaining staff becomes unsustainable. These are not positions of convenience, they are the minimum required to keep a shelter functioning humanely and professionally. The Board urges the Committee to recognize that cutting an ACT position does not save money so much as it transfers the cost onto the animals who go without care and the community members who go without service.

II. Full Funding for the Dogs Playing for Life Contract — Third and Final Year

The Board urgently requests that the Committee restore full funding for the Dogs Playing for Life (DPFL) contract. This is the third and final year of the contract, and its elimination in the Proposed Budget would terminate a program that has proven essential to animal welfare and public safety in our shelters.

DPFL provides structured, out-of-kennel enrichment, socialization, and exercise for dogs in our care. Without it, dogs are confined to kennels for extended periods, a condition well-documented to cause behavioral deterioration, increased stress, reduced adoptability, and elevated bite risk.

The public safety and financial implications of cutting this program cannot be overstated. The City has paid out over \$31 million in lawsuit settlements and jury awards over the past four years as a result of serious dog bite incidents involving animals in our shelters. The annual cost of the DPFL contract is a fraction of a single settlement. The Board submits that funding DPFL is not simply a matter of compassion, it is a matter of fiscal prudence and risk management for the City of Los Angeles. We strongly urge the Committee to restore this funding for the contract's third and final year.

III. Restoration of the Animal Food and Medical Supplies Budgets

The Board respectfully and urgently requests that the Committee restore both the Animal Food/Feed and Grain Account and the Animal Medical Supplies Account to minimal levels.

The FY 2025-26 Adopted Budget provided \$388,591 in the Medical Supplies Account and \$200,000 in the Food Account. The Proposed Budget eliminates the food account entirely and reduces the medical account to less than \$50,000, leaving the Department with less than one dollar per animal to provide medical care for approximately 50,000 animals.

These cuts will force the Department to rely on the Animal Welfare Trust Fund, a fund sustained entirely by donations, to cover the most basic necessities: food and medicine. This is neither a sustainable nor appropriate use of donor contributions. Angelenos who donate to the Animal Welfare Trust Fund do so to enhance the lives of the animals in our care: to provide enrichment, bedding, comfort, and opportunity. They did not sign up to underwrite the City's obligation to feed and provide basic medical care to impounded animals. Nor should they be expected to.

The Board asks the Committee to affirm the City's responsibility for the basic welfare of animals in its care by restoring these critical budget lines.

IV. Full Funding for the Spay and Neuter Program

The Board supports the Department's request that the Spay and Neuter Special Purpose Fund be fully funded at the requested level of \$6,516,196.

While the Proposed Budget includes \$5,502,335 for the Spay and Neuter Program, it simultaneously increases the value of the free vouchers without increasing the program's total funding. This creates a structural shortfall: the same appropriation now purchases fewer procedures, forcing the Department to cap the number of vouchers issued to the community.

This is precisely the wrong direction. Spay and neuter is the most effective upstream investment the City can make to reduce shelter intake. Every animal that is not born in the community is one fewer animal that eventually enters our shelter system, at significant cost to the City in housing, care, medical treatment, and staff time. Capping voucher availability undermines the program's core purpose and will compound shelter intake pressures for years to come.

The Board's requested increase of \$6,516,196 was a modest and carefully considered ask. We urge the Committee to fund it fully so that spay and neuter services remain accessible to members of our community who need them.

Conclusion

The Board of Animal Services Commissioners recognizes the difficult fiscal environment the City faces, and we are committed to working collaboratively with the Administration and this Committee to find solutions. However, the items outlined in this statement are not discretionary enhancements, they are the minimum foundation required to operate a safe, humane, and effective municipal shelter system. We respectfully urge the Budget and Finance Committee to support the restoration of the three eliminated positions, full funding for the Dogs Playing for Life contract in its third and final year, restoration of the food and medical supplies budgets, and full funding for the Spay and Neuter Program at the requested level of \$6,516,196.

The animals in our care depend on this Committee's leadership. So do the communities, staff, volunteers, and donors who have placed their trust in the City of Los Angeles to care for them.

Respectfully submitted,

Board of Animal Services Commissioners

Alison McBeth-Featherstone, President
Olivia E. Garcia, Vice President
Alexander Kasendorf, Commissioner
Theresa Sardisco, Commissioner
Yvette Smith, Commissioner

cc: Annette G. Ramirez, Interim General Manager, Department of Animal Services
Councilmember Bob Blumenfeld, CD 3
Councilmember Heather Hutt, CD 10

SUBJECT: STATEMENT OF SUPPORT -- DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL SERVICES FISCAL YEAR
2026-27 PROPOSED BUDGET

Councilmember Tim McOsker, CD 15
Councilmember Eunisses Hernandez, CD 1
Matt Hale, Deputy Mayor
Elyse Matson, Budget Director
Matthew Szabo, City Administrative Officer