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California State Senate

SENATOR
ROSILICIE OCHOA BOGH
NINETEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



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JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET

April 1, 2025

Honorable Mike McGuire
President Pro Tempore of the Senate
1021 O Street, Room 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Scott Wiener, Chair
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
1020 N Street, Room 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Christopher Cabaldon, Chair
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #4
1020 N Street, Room 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

BUDGET REQUEST: \$30 MILLION - CALIFORNIA SPAY/NEUTER FUND

Dear Members,

We are writing to request a \$30 million allocation in the 2025-26 State Budget to establish a California Spay/Neuter Fund. Five states – Maine, Maryland, New Mexico, West Virginia and Delaware – have allocated funding to create a Spay/Neuter Fund and have made great strides in addressing pet overpopulation. Washington and Hawaii are considering legislation to create a fund. In the long run, spaying and neutering saves money.

Currently, \$400 million is spent annually to support 153 public animal shelters, many overcrowded and operating with limited resources. While pet overpopulation has been a longstanding problem, it has reached crisis levels in recent years. This means that shelter staff have been forced to euthanize family-friendly animals solely for space.

In addition to the 153 public shelters, there are private shelters, nonprofit shelters, and large and small animal rescue organizations who have invested significant time and money to improve the situation, only to find that the dog and cat populations continue to increase, a direct result of the underfunding of spay and neuter programs. Preventative spay neuter programs receive less than one percent of the funding that California invests in the operation of its animal shelter system.

Background and Justification:

1. **Sheltering is expensive - spaying and neutering is not.** The average cost to spay or neuter an animal is \$160 and the average cost to shelter an animal ranges from \$900-\$2,000.

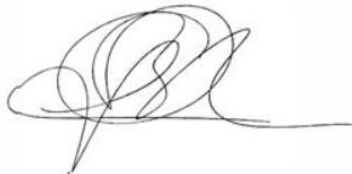
2. **Other states have saved money by funding robust and accessible spay neuter programs.** Reducing the number of animals entering shelters reduces shelter operating costs and euthanasia rates.
 - a. **New Hampshire.** The state launched a publicly-funded spay neuter program in 1994. Five years of investment resulted in 30,985 fewer cats and dogs entering shelters than in the six years before the program began - greatly reducing costs.
 - b. **Maryland.** While the number of overall intakes to animal shelters decreased by 1.3% from 2014 to 2018, the number of stray animal intakes decreased by 12.1%. The number of animals euthanized due to the lack of space in shelters decreased by almost 49.7%.
3. **It is difficult to access low-cost spay/neuter services in California.** Demand for low-cost spay/neuter services has long outstripped supply, demonstrating that Californians understand the importance of spaying and neutering their pets and would be willing to do so if more low-cost clinics were available.
4. **California's current investment's in spay/neuter services is woefully inadequate.** The state's *Pet Lovers License Plate Program* raises roughly \$250,000 a year, and AB 1983 (Maienschein, 2024), which reinstated the tax check-off program to support low- or no-cost spay/neuter programs is projected to raise a similar amount. The funding raised by these two programs falls far short of the investment needed for a state as large as California.

California cannot rely on an already overburdened shelter system to solve its pet overpopulation problem nor will an increase in the animal adoption rate solve the problem. However, a state investment to create a spay/neuter fund would go a long way toward greatly reducing the overpopulation of cats and dogs.

Because California already has an infrastructure of shelters and nonprofit spay/neuter clinics – many of which partner with their local shelters – there is no need to build costly new facilities. Animal shelters excel at providing high quality, high volume spay/neuter procedures, as do nonprofit clinics. There is a lack of adequate, ongoing funding to provide community-based spay/neuter clinics that allow any owners who want to spay/neuter their pets to do so at a reasonable cost.

We respectfully urge your support of this \$30 million one-time General Fund allocation to help ease the overcrowding in California's animal shelter system.

Sincerely,



ROSILICIE OCHOA BOGH
Senator, 19th District



MARIE ALVARADO-GIL
Senator, 4th District



THOMAS J. UMBERG
Senator, 34th District

