



THE CAT FANCIERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

World's Largest Registry of Pedigreed Cats

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

Issued: April 24, 2009

SB 250 -- Mandatory Sterilization of Cats and Dogs CALIFORNIA

BRIEF SUMMATION: This bill mandates sterilization of most dogs and all outdoor cats in California. It also mandates sterilization of owned cats if found in violation of the bill's provisions, if impounded, or if found at large. By creating new crimes and imposing new duties on local animal control agencies, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program upon local governments.

CURRENT STATUS: The bill has passed the California Senate Local Government Committee. It was amended on April 21, 2009 and will be heard by the Senate Appropriations Committee on May 4, 2009 at 10:00 a.m..

IMMEDIATE ACTION IS NEEDED

Club/organizations and individuals write to the Senate Appropriations committee members.

California fanciers should visit or write their own state Senators and Representatives to inform them you are opposed to this bill.

WHAT THIS LEGISLATION WILL MEAN TO YOU AND ARGUMENTS AGAINST THIS LEGISLATION:

See the previous CFA Action Alerts dated March 12, 2009 and April 2, 2009:

<http://www.cfa.org/exhibitors/alert-CA-SB250-031209.pdf>

<http://www.cfa.org/exhibitors/alert-CA-SB250-040209.pdf>

ACTION TO TAKE:

ORGANIZATIONS (clubs, rescue groups, etc.) must write to the committee members immediately – there is not much time!! Send your letter BY MAIL to be received by the Committee Consultant, Mark McKenzie. He will be preparing the bill analysis for the committee.

INDIVIDUALS NOTE: It is important for individuals to send opposition to the committee too.

In addition to the Committee Consultant, please also copy the thirteen Appropriations Committee members and as a courtesy copy the bill's author, Senator Dean Florez.

- 1) Send your letters on Organization or Club *letterhead*. Mail or fax - hard copy is important.
- 2) Reference the title - " Re: **OPPOSE SB 250 as amended 4/21/09**
An act to add Section 30804.6 to the Food and Agricultural Code, relating to animals.
- 3) Begin your letter by stating that your club (state name) is **OPPOSED** to SB 250 as amended April 21, 2009. If you are an out of state breed clubs with members in California, please be sure to note that fact.
- 4) Don't worry too much about substance; the goal is to express your opposition. One page is ideal – 2 pages are OK.
- 5) Put comments in your own words so the letters do not appear to be “form”. You may use the samples below - make only a few brief points. If you would like more suggested points please look at the previous CFA Action Alerts.
- 6) Conclude your letter by again stating your opposition to the Bill; thank the Senator for his/her time and ask for a NO vote on SB 250.

IN ADDITION TO THE COMMITTEE, NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL CALIFORNIANS TO BEGIN CONTACTING THEIR STATE REPRESENTATIVES TO EXPRESS YOUR OPPOSITION.

Please visit their district offices [in you area] call, fax and write them. To find out your state senator or assemblyman, visit: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html> This link can be used to find the names of your representatives as well as contact information.

SUGGESTED POINTS – cat issues:

** SB 250 provides that anyone providing "care, security, or sustenance" for a stray on their property for 30 days becomes its "custodian" subject to all of the punitive effects of the bill. Thus a casual feeder or caretaker of a stray cat may be fined if the animal is unspayed or unneutered, and is subject to fines and penalties if the stray cat is impounded. Imposing fines or other punitive measures tends to discourage otherwise caring individuals from coming to the aid of unowned/feral cats. Reproduction of unowned intact cats will escalate.

** SB 250 is an unfunded mandate on local government. Feral cats and unweaned kittens make up the majority of cat intakes at many shelters. If casual feeders are forced to surrender stray cats to animal control, this will increase euthanasia and costs for local shelters. It will only further burden the counties and municipalities and divert limited resources that would be better utilized elsewhere.

** Often free-roaming cats are considered to be "loosely owned." The important factor in reducing the reproduction of unowned/free-roaming cats is the point when a person declares "I own this cat" because this leads to their taking responsibility. People understand that ownership means responsibility. I love my cat-- I own my cat. Education as to ownership has helped reduce euthanasia, and shelter costs, over the years. This bill would use the artificial term "custodian" to describe some casual feeders. This is a step backward in the goal of elevating the status of the cat by accepting ownership.

** Often those who offer sustenance to neighborhood cats or restaurant area cats are not sure if they are owned or intact. They may be incapable of accounting for each cat, ascertaining ages or physically getting every cat altered within 30 days. Each jurisdiction would need to implement some kind of assistance program.

** An owner/custodian who offers any cat for sale, trade or adoption SHALL notify the licensing agency if cats are licensed in the jurisdiction within 10 days. This is unnecessary administrative expense when cats may be sold to persons in other parts of the State or out of state. Jurisdictions would be required to educate the public, answer questions, provide a reporting form and follow through even if kittens are transferred prior to licensing age.

** Cat owners with a valuable pedigreed unaltered cat impounded due to a mishap, fire or other disaster must be sterilized – this will lead to litigation with expense for the local jurisdiction.

** Local jurisdictions, 58 counties and 480 cities, do not all have ordinances or programs regarding free-roaming cats. SB 250 would require them to implement some program including ordinance revisions and public education and some kind of enforcement.

PLANNED MEETINGS: The Senate Appropriations Committee is scheduled to take up SB 250 on **May 4, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 4203**. Please act promptly.

CONTACT LIST: Contact information for the Senate Local Government committee, the committee consultant, and the bill's author are as follows:

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