

Date: May 7, 2019

Re: Letter of support for Long Beach Animal Care Services to become a responsible, open-admission, No Kill shelter

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council,

We want to thank you for taking the time to hear the wishes of community members regarding the transformation of Long Beach Animal Care Services into a truly compassionate leader in sheltering. We realize that many in our community care about our pets, who, due to the winds of change in human lives, may find themselves in the Long Beach animal shelter. The goal we *all* aspire to is to obtain positive outcomes for them, including placement into loving homes. We also understand that transitioning from one sheltering approach to another comes with challenges. We appreciate your taking on that challenge.

The Compassion Saves Policy Direction by Councilwoman Pearce, Gonzalez, Price and Mungo is well-meaning, but it unfortunately does not adequately specify the steps needed to make Long Beach Animal Care Services the truly compassionate shelter the good residents of Long Beach wish and desire it to be. **“No Kill” is defined as saving all healthy and treatable animals in a shelter through effective programs.** This is typically taken to be 90% of animals; however, many cities are now saving 92-99% of their shelter animals. The process that we hope to see on the way to creating an open-admission No Kill shelter is this:

- Invite a national No Kill authority to speak to Council and answer questions from the Council and the public
- Adopt the No Kill Equation as the framework for lifesaving at the LBACS shelter
- Give the Task Force input into how the No Kill Equation programs are implemented
- Ensure that the No Kill programs and policies are incorporated into the LBACS Strategic Plan
- Provide an independent, third-party-produced report on the existing relationship and practices between SPCALA and LBACS
- Establish LBACS’ autonomy from SPCALA, with all operations and finances working separately between these two entities so that LBACS can work to scale
- Implement the programs of the No Kill Equation at the Long Beach animal shelter

The effectiveness of a shelter is not in its name; it’s in the types of programs it operates. No Kill programs have been immensely successful in garnering the collaboration and goodwill of the community. They have also had overwhelmingly positive effects on animal shelter employees. We believe that the community is eager to support Long Beach’s journey to become a lifesaving shelter using No Kill programs to save lives.

City Council now has the opportunity to support the animal-compassionate community in Long Beach, 93% of whom support a No Kill shelter according to recent polls, by affirming its support for a No Kill approach to animal sheltering at LBACS. The key programs of such an approach are to:

1. Revise the mission of LBACS to make obtaining positive outcomes for Long Beach’s lost and homeless pets the agency’s primary mission, alongside public safety;

2. Implement a **comprehensive LBACS adoption program, separate from SPCALA**, to significantly increase life-saving capacity;
3. Extensively **market animals in a variety of forms** using promotions (e.g., low-cost adoptions) that maximize lifesaving;
4. Establish a **large-scale LBACS foster program, separate from SPCALA**, to increase cage space and increase the number of animals adopted from the shelter;
5. Implement and sustain a **City-supported kitten fostering program with neo-natal fostering capacity**;
6. Increase efforts to provide **high-volume low-cost spay/neuter surgeries** to the residents of Long Beach;
7. Implement a **large-scale LBACS volunteer program** to staff lifesaving programs;
8. Improve **outreach to and relations with private rescue organizations** to facilitate their ability to save lives;
9. Build the capacity of its **Shelter Neuter Release (SNR) program** to decrease the number of community cats euthanized at the shelter;
10. Improve LBACS capacity for **behavioral evaluation and management of animals** and use an **established protocol designed to maximize lifesaving for at-risk dogs and cats**;
11. Decrease owner surrenders through **pet retention programs and community outreach**;
12. **Increase redemptions** through proactive policies designed to return animals to their owners (e.g., shelter help line; shelter intervention program; subsidized redemption fees);
13. End Empty-Cage Killing;
14. Increase LBACS' transparency to the public by **publishing all animal outcomes monthly** on its website;
15. Reexamine and redefine LBACS's relationship with SPCALA and **formalize agreements to ensure that LBACS operates fully autonomously of SPCALA**;
16. **Reserve the act of euthanasia for animals that are medically incurably suffering and those with severe behavioral issues.**

We urge the Council to support all of these items and to seek the funding necessary to implement them, realizing that significant **cost savings can be achieved through the effective use of a volunteer program, and further recognizing that the shelter generates a significant amount of funding from pet guardians through licensing that could be re-allocated to serve the animal-compassionate community in Long Beach by funding LBACS.** Additional funding can be obtained through fundraising, which increases once shelters take the initiative to move toward a compassionate, No Kill approach to animal sheltering.

Signed,