

May 24, 2014

Dear Mr. Jasthi:

We are writing in response to your May 13 article regarding best cities for dog ownership.

Stayin' Alive Long Beach is the No Kill advocacy group for shelter animals in Long Beach, CA, which ranked 10th on your list for dog ownership. We would like to put forth for your consideration the following:

One of the criteria for ranking cities in your article properly should have been the kill rate of dogs in the candidate cities' animal shelters. Long Beach currently has a 29% kill rate for dogs, and a 50% kill rate for pit bulls in their city-operated animal shelter.

While Long Beach may have good walkability and a dog beach, these amenities are only enjoyed by people who have not lost their dogs. However, even the most responsible of pet guardians may have an unfortunate occurrence befall them, resulting in the loss of their beloved pet. When that happens, that animal has a good chance of ending up at the city-run animal shelter. If a person has lost his or her dog in Long Beach, and particularly if that dog is a pit-bull, that person runs the very real and tangible risk of their dog being killed by the City. Furthermore, the City charges guardians between \$160 and \$260 or more to redeem their pets from the shelter if their pets are unfortunate enough to end up there, with no reduced fee structure to help those who cannot afford such high impound fees.

The emotional and financial effects on pet owners of losing their pet, when a 29-50% chance they'll be killed at the shelter exists, can be devastating for pet guardians, many of whom view their pets as family.

The state of affairs currently exists because Long Beach city management actively resists putting in place a full adoption program, foster programs, proactive pet retention programs to help people keep their pets out of the shelter, and a vibrant volunteer program at the Long Beach animal shelter – all solutions that Stayin' Alive Long Beach advocates.

We invite you to visit our website at www.stayinalivelongbeach.org and our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/stayinalivelb to learn more about our work to change Long Beach's regressive policies and programs at the Long Beach animal shelter and bring Long Beach to a 90% save rate for its lost and homeless animals. We hope that if you run a similar article in the future, for any type of companion animal, that you will take into account the kill rate of the animals at the city shelter. It, too, is a measure of well-being of animals and their guardians in a community.

Best regards,

Patricia Turner, Ph.D.