

Councilman
TONY CARDENAS
6th Council District



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CO-AUTHOR OF SPAY/NEUTER ORDINANCE DEMANDS
VOUCHER PROGRAM TO CONTINUE

Cardenas Says Voucher Program is “Key in Creating a No-Kill City and Saving Money”

Today, the co-author of the city’s new mandatory spay/neuter ordinance issued a letter to General Manager Ed Boks urging the Los Angeles Animal Services Department to continue the Spay and Neuter Voucher Program. Councilman Tony Cardenas, said the department would be “taking a step backwards in our efforts to see Los Angeles become a no-kill city if the discount program is canceled.” The discount voucher program helps lower-income families afford to alter their pets and comply with the law. In addition, Cardenas points out that it would be more costly to the city in both the short and long-term if the program is discontinued.

“The cost savings of cutting the voucher program is shortsighted at best and will only result in immediate and long-term higher costs to the city,” said Cardenas. “A dog or cat that is not spayed or neutered now can have six offspring within a matter of two months. Furthermore, with spring and summer right around the corner, this city could see an alarming increase in strays in our shelters. This will intensify the strain on the department’s already strapped resources.”

It’s estimated that it costs over \$100 to house and euthanize one animal. This figure does not include vet care, which could significantly increase that cost. With the discount voucher program, the city pays about \$30 per altered animal with the pet owner taking care of the rest. Depending on the vet, spay/neuter procedures can average anywhere from \$100 to \$150. The city also offers “free vouchers” to residents who qualify whereby the city takes care of the full cost of the operation.

“Giving discounts to help lower-income families spay/neuter their pets and comply with the law is far more fiscally sound than over-burdening our shelters and employees with animals that have no homes,” continued Cardenas. “When the ordinance was drafted, my focus was on drastically reducing the over 15,000 dogs and cats euthanized per year. Without assistance, lower-income families will be unfairly burdened and will be put at risk for non-compliance with the law. In these tough economic times, individuals should not be forced to choose between feeding their families and complying with the law.”

Cardenas will be introducing a motion on Friday calling for the continuation of the voucher program and a report on the success of the spay/neuter ordinance. The letter and motion are attached.

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