



**TESTIMONY OF THE PET ADVOCACY NETWORK
FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE
FRESNO CITY COUNCIL IN OPPOSITION TO THE
RESOLUTION TO BAN COMPANION ANIMAL BREEDING**

June 20, 2024

As an organization that routinely supports legislative efforts to advance the welfare of animals the Pet Advocacy Network appreciates the opportunity to testify today on the proposed moratorium on the issuance of unaltered dog licenses.

Nobody cares more about the safety and health of the pet animals we sell than does the Pet Advocacy Network. We have, for many years, provided a highly respected animal care certification program intended to ensure that employees are well trained in the care of the animals they sell; a program that is widely utilized not only by persons in the commercial pet trade but also shelters and humane societies throughout the country and one that has even been adopted as a statutory standard in some states. Our association has long been recognized as the voice for a responsible pet trade. The Pet Advocacy Network and its retail members – both large and small – work to educate and empower employees so that they, in turn, can help customers determine the perfect pet animal for them.

Shelter overpopulation is a very real concern in Fresno and across California. Responsible breeders, however, are not the cause of this problem any more than retail pet stores were. Los Angeles has had a ban on the retail sale of dogs, cats and rabbits for over a decade and California put a similar ban in place several years ago. In both cases shelter overpopulation was used as a justification for the ban despite a lack of evidence that such a policy would have any impact. Our testimony to the Los Angeles Personnel and Animal Welfare Committee in 2012 was absolutely correct in that the ban enacted by the city has had no effect on shelter populations, nor has the statewide ban enacted in 2017. In fact, Los Angeles has become a case study in how bans on the retail sale of dogs and cats result in the closing of small businesses without having any impact on substandard breeding or shelter populations. We would strongly discourage Fresno from following their ill advised example.

The current proposal to place a moratorium on all breeding and intact dog ownership appears to be another attempt to solve the shelter overpopulation problem through guesswork rather than informed policy making. Just as the ban on the retail sale of dogs and cats resulted in only negative consequences for the city, a ban on breeding and intact dog ownership will certainly harm small businesses and responsible pet owners while having no indication that it will reduce

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shelter populations.

Fresno Municipal Code (FMC) Section 10-328 "requires all dogs over the age of five months to be spayed or neutered, unless their owners purchase the appropriate license for the privilege of maintaining the animal intact and allowing it to breed." Yet the city gives no indication that any citations have been issued for unlicensed breeding or that the litters of licensed breeders have contributed in any way to shelter overpopulation. Does Fresno really believe that further restricting those breeders and pet owners who are responsibly licensing their animals will somehow cause people who are already operating illegally to suddenly decide to comply with even more onerous restrictions? It is far more likely that such a policy will result in breeders and owners deciding not to seek licensure or, particularly in the case of show dog or cat breeders who are dependent on their animals being intact, leave the city.

The Pet Advocacy Network believes that, rather than making a policy change that will devastate small businesses and pet owners in the hopes that it works, Fresno should commit additional resources to enforcement of current policies and conduct a comprehensive study on the origin of the shelter animals so that policies to reduce the population of unwanted companion animals in a focused and effective way can be enacted.

Sincerely,

Robert Likins
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