



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL PASSES LARGEST SPAY & NEUTER ORDINANCE IN THE NATION

Los Angeles, CA – Today the Los Angeles City Council voted in support of what will be the largest spay & neuter ordinance in the nation. This ordinance, which was introduced by Councilmember Richard Alarcón and unanimously approved by the Public Safety Committee, will require all cats and dogs in the City of Los Angeles to be spayed or neutered if they are over the age of 4 months unless they fall under one of the seven categories for exemption. The ordinance passed with a vote of 14 to 1 and will go into effect approximately 45 days after the Mayor signs it.

“The problem in our city is not the animals but the human owners and this ordinance will allow the Department of Animal services to target resources towards the worst offenders whose irresponsibility threatens public safety and fills our shelters with unwanted dogs and cats,” said Councilmember Alarcón. “This spay and neuter ordinance can serve as a model for the nation, as it will reduce the number of animals that need to be killed every year but also balances this with reasonable exemptions, an educational component and ample opportunity for low-cost and free spay and neuter services.”

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said, “Thanks to the leadership of Councilman Alarcón, the City of Los Angeles is taking a crucial step towards increasing the practice of spaying and neutering our pets and reducing our homeless pet population.”

Each year, almost 50,000 unwanted cats and dogs are born in the City of Los Angeles. Left unspayed and un-neutered, these animals reproduce far beyond the capacity of our local shelters and overwhelm animal rescue groups and the community who often find it difficult to accommodate them. Shelters are often forced to euthanize young and healthy animals to make room for an ever increasing number, with puppies and kittens euthanized at the highest rate. In 2007, the City of Los Angeles spent over \$2 million on euthanization of animals, killing 8,960 cats and 6,049 dogs.

This ordinance also establishes an advisory committee composed of 15 members who will find ways to educate the general public about services that exist to help with outreach on the importance of spaying and neutering animals. The City currently provides vouchers for free and reduced cost spay & neuter services for senior citizens and low-income residents. Specific exemptions from required spaying and neutering in this ordinance include dogs and cats approved by a registry or association approved by the Department of Animal Services, dogs being trained for work, service dogs including guide and signal dogs, law enforcement, military or rescue dogs, animals for whom the owner can produce a letter from a registered veterinarian stating there is a medical reason to exempt the animal and animals that have a valid city breeding permit.

The ordinance does not create any new requirements for breeders and also does not criminalize pet owners who are found to have unaltered pets. With the first violation an owner has 60 days to have his or her animal spayed or neutered. After 60 days and upon subsequent citations the owner is fined or given community service hours and the animal still must be spayed or neutered. It is only upon the fourth violation and after six months from the first violation that an owner can be prosecuted for a misdemeanor.