Charting a Path Forward: Reaching California’s policy to save all adoptable and treatable animals
Executive Summary
During the past 15 years, many California communities have made meaningful strides to reduce the deaths of homeless animals. Public and private sources have funded more low-cost programs for dog and cat spaying and neutering. Public education campaigns have promoted the importance of adopting pets, and a growing number of private rescue groups have been formed and increased the degree to which they assist shelters in finding new homes for animals.

These developments have significantly improved the situation for the state's dogs. In 2010, 459,000 dogs entered California's public shelters and agencies compared with 539,000 in 1998. Fewer dogs entering shelters coupled with an increase in positive outcomes (e.g., adoption, rescue/transfer) significantly reduced the number of dogs euthanized. California’s public animal care and control agencies and those non-profit organizations who contract to provide sheltering services for local governments euthanized approximately 173,000 dogs in 2010 compared with 326,000 in 1998.

Unfortunately, cats in California did not experience the same improvements in life-saving opportunities. More cats entered public shelters in 2010, an estimated 393,000, compared with 368,000 in 1998. In 2010, public agencies euthanized an estimated 278,000 cats, which effectively matches the 285,000 euthanized in 1998.

In the wake of Governor Brown’s proposal to repeal certain existing state laws affecting animal shelters in California owing to budget-related issues, a diverse statewide group of stakeholders
formed and worked throughout 2012 and into 2013 to identify meaningful ways to realize California’s policy "that no adoptable [or treatable] animal should be euthanized if it can be adopted into a suitable home."^5

The team included representatives of local government, non-profit animal-sheltering organizations and rescue groups, veterinary professionals, animal protection experts, and philanthropists. The stakeholders took a fact-based approach to evaluate what was--and what was not--working to produce positive outcomes for homeless animals (return to an owner, adoption, transfer to another humane organization for placement, or return to location of origin). The process included gathering and analyzing data on outcomes for dogs and cats, reviewing best practices in shelter management, and exploring life-saving programs that have been successfully implemented.

The stakeholders developed 23 recommendations that California agencies and communities can utilize to help animals, advance the work of animal sheltering, and move California closer toward its goal of saving every adoptable and treatable animal. Some of these changes would require modifications to existing California state statutes; others are “best practices” recommendations that the group believes California animal shelters should strongly consider implementing. Communities should prioritize the implementation of these strategies to improve welfare and outcomes for homeless animals.

In a given community, the next step may be to decrease intake, increase funding, and try new efforts to increase adoptions. Regardless of the approach, the intent is that every California animal shelter seeks to truly become a safe haven for animals, where they receive quality care and a meaningful opportunity to be released alive.

The stakeholders' group formed four committees that focused on the following topics:

**Intake Reduction**

People often turn animals in to shelters without a realistic understanding of the animal's likelihood of survival or before making any efforts themselves to find an alternate home. Two recommendations address the process by which owners relinquish animals to shelters. These approaches can empower citizens to meet their own pets’ particular needs, reduce the number of animals coming into shelters, and improve the outcomes for those who do.^6

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^5 SEC. 5. Section 1834.4 (a) and (b) "Adoptable" animals are healthy animals that are well-socialized and suitable for placement. "Treatable" animals are not immediately adoptable, but can be made so with a reasonable investment of effort and resources to address health and/or behavioral issues. See also, California Food and Agriculture Code 17005, http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=fac&group=17001-18000&file=17001-17006 (accessed July 2013).

^6 Intake reduction can also be achieved by increasing the number of animals in the community who are sterilized and therefore unable to produce additional offspring, which may be unwanted. Because there is so much emphasis on spay/neuter programs and their importance already in circulation within the industry and California communities, the stakeholders opted to focus their efforts on other innovative ways to reduce the number of animals coming into shelters.
Standards and Practices

How shelters care for and move animals through their facility influences how many find homes. Ten recommendations focus on shelter standards and practices covering housing and caring for animals, maintaining records to help owners reclaim pets, moving animals as quickly as possible toward placement, and working collaboratively with rescue groups.

Cats

Six recommendations seek to improve outcomes for cats by addressing how cats come into and move through animal shelters as well as best practices for situations where people are feeding ownerless cats who live in the community.

Budget

Two recommendations identify opportunities for sheltering agencies to increase revenue through ensuring better compliance with state dog licensing laws. One recommendation suggests changes to government contracting formulas that currently reimburse some shelters based on the number of animals handled rather than on what happens to the animals (e.g., the number leaving the shelter alive and other outcome-based measures). One recommendation addresses unfunded mandates.

A final recommendation regarding data reporting emerged as part of the review and discussion process.

Comment Period and Listening Tour

The first draft of this white paper was posted online to www.cashelteringreport.org on September 3, 2013. Comments were solicited online, in writing and in person through November 15, 2013. The stakeholders’ group received and reviewed 72 written comments following closure of this comment period.

Additionally, during the comment period, the stakeholders’ group hosted a widely-promoted listening tour that visited seven California communities to present findings and proposed recommendations and solicit feedback.7 One hundred and eleven leaders from 63 animal care agencies (both public and non-profit) participated and 151 members of the public attended these meetings.

Following the conclusion of the comment period the stakeholders’ group modified this white paper into the final format and recommendations offered herein.

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The Status of California's Shelter Animals
In 2010, the most recent year for which detailed results available have been analyzed, more than 850,000 dogs and cats entered California's public shelter system (hereafter referred to as “intake”). This number was down from more than 900,000 in 1998.

Available data regarding the number of animals moving through California animal shelters is imperfect. The California Department of Public Health requires cities and counties to report local animal control data annually. However, many private humane groups that accept cats and dogs do not have government contracts or accept animals directly from the public (e.g., owner surrenders). Since these groups do not have to report to the state, it is unknown how many animals these groups take in, care for or place each year. Further, local government agencies do not always comply consistently with the state’s data collection requirement.

The numbers that follow include only the totals for the reporting public agencies (covering areas that represent 87 percent of California's population). For these organizations alone, approximately 742,000 dogs and cats entered facilities in 2010 compared with 789,000 in 1998. In 2010, 54 percent of intake was dogs compared with 46 percent cats.  

What happens once animals enter the shelter system differs greatly for dogs and cats. In 2010, of the 399,000 dogs coming into the shelters (rounded to nearest thousand):
  • 150,000 were euthanized ("euthanasia")
  • 133,000 were adopted directly from that shelter or agency ("adoptions")
  • 74,000 were reclaimed by their owners ("reclaims")
  • 26,000 were transferred to another humane group for placement in new homes ("transfers").
    – Adoptions, reclaims, and transfers collectively make up "positive outcomes" for dogs entering shelters.
  • 16,000 had other dispositions. They died or were lost or otherwise unaccounted for while in the shelter system.

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8 These estimates come from adjusting results for public agencies in cities and counties representing 87 percent of the state's population as if they were representative of all of California. Because these agencies come from a mix of small and large communities, the assumption that they are representative is reasonable. The resulting adjusted figures for 2010 annual intake provide a sense of the magnitude of sheltering issues.

Outcomes for Dogs in California Shelters - 2010

![Dogs Outcomes Chart](chart_dogs)

Of the 342,000 cats entering shelters:
- 242,000 were euthanized
- 66,000 were adopted
- 6,000 were reclaimed by their owners
- 17,000 were transferred for placement
- 11,000 had other dispositions

Outcomes for Cats in California Shelters - 2010

![Cats Outcomes Chart](chart_cats)

Adopted 33%,
Euthanized 38%,
Reclaimed 19%,
Transferred 7%,
Other 4%

Adopted 24%
Euthanized 71%
Reclaimed 2%
Transferred 5%
Other 3%
Though there are still far too many dogs euthanized, their numbers reflect substantial improvement over the 13-year period from 1998 to 2010 (Figure 1). Intake has declined by 17 percent, or approximately 70,000 fewer dogs.

- The number euthanized fell by nearly half (133,000 fewer dogs).
- Rates of positive outcomes – adoptions, reclaims, and transfers – all went up, especially the adoption rate, which nearly doubled from 17 percent to 33 percent.

Cat statistics tell a very different story, however (Figure 1).

- Intake increased by 6 percent, about 22,000 more cats.
- The number euthanized fell by only 2 percent, about 6,000 fewer cats.
- Adoption and transfer rates improved somewhat, but the reclaim rate did not.

Figure 1

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intake</strong></td>
<td>469,000</td>
<td>399,000</td>
<td>-17%</td>
<td>320,000</td>
<td>342,000</td>
<td>+6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Euthanasia</strong></td>
<td>283,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>-47%</td>
<td>248,000</td>
<td>242,000</td>
<td>-2%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Euthanized</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reclaimed</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transferred</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Although annual state-by-state numbers are not readily available, studies show similar results elsewhere. In Ohio, between 1996 and 2004, for example, dog intake and euthanasia declined while cat intake and euthanasia increased. In Colorado from 2000 to 2007, dog intake improved but euthanasia remained stable while cat intake and euthanasia both increased substantially.

Despite all the increased efforts, significant challenges remain for California as well as many other states to end the euthanasia of adoptable and treatable homeless pets.

It’s worth noting that most California animal shelters – both public and private agencies – handle animals from species other than canine and feline. Animal shelters do take in species like rats, guinea pigs, birds, rabbits, reptiles, amphibians, horses and livestock, and even wildlife. The number of these animals handled is typically a small percentage of many shelter’s overall animal intake. Unfortunately statewide data is not available for analyzing the trends in these species over the same period analyzed here. Where reasonable, we have included these species in our recommendations.

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Policy and Funding Context

California law includes a variety of statutes that regulate how shelters handle and process stray and homeless animals. In recent years, the most well-known set of statutes are those created by the 1998 enactment of the so-called “Hayden Law,” named for former state senator Tom Hayden, who championed its passage. Please see the resources appendix for a link to the full text of the Hayden Law.\(^1\)

The Hayden Law’s most transformative feature was to adopt a statewide policy "that no adoptable animal should be euthanized if it can be adopted into a suitable home" and "that no treatable animal should be euthanized."\(^{11}\)

Key provisions in the Hayden Law to support that policy preference included requirements that shelters providing public animal control or sheltering agencies:

- Work to increase the number of animals reunited with owners by:
  - Increasing the minimum length of time to hold stray animals ("holding period") from 72 hours to four to six business days
  - Holding not only dogs and cats but also other domestic pets such as rodents, rabbits, birds, and reptiles
  - Publicly posting a list of lost and found animals
- Establish minimum holding periods for all owner-relinquished animals
- Postpone euthanasia for any animal until after the expiration of the minimum holding period, with exceptions only for the injured or very sick
- Release animals slated for euthanasia to rescue groups, upon request
- Provide prompt and necessary veterinary care, nutrition, and shelter
- Maintain a system of record keeping essential for reuniting lost animals with owners, managing housing, and documenting holding times and medical care

The law also defined feral cats (ownerless, free-roaming cats) and allowed agencies to establish a testing process that could lead to a shorter holding period before they euthanized or released those cats.

Cities and counties claimed that some of these provisions increased expenses for local animal shelters. For example, longer holding periods meant more food, cleaning, and veterinary care, and, in some cases, the need to increase facility space. More record keeping, such as to maintain lost and found lists, also involved minor costs. Los Angeles County filed a test claim with the California Commission on State Mandates (“the commission”) for reimbursement from the state for complying with these provisions, and was joined by other local governments.

In 2001, the commission ruled that several components of the Hayden Law imposed mandates that required the state to reimburse local governments, over the objection of Hayden Law proponents who argued against the notion that the Hayden Law included any mandates. In 2008, following several years (and many millions of dollars) of claims filed by cities and counties for reimbursement from the state, the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) issued a report questioning whether the reimbursement formula undermined the Hayden Law’s policy goals.

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\(^{11}\) California State 1785, Hayden (1998), SEC. 5. Section 1834.4 (a) and (b)
As described by the LAO, the most significant of the reimbursable obligations – to hold animals for longer periods – is driven by a formula based on the number of animals held for the longer period but ultimately euthanized. This is based on the commission’s logic that local agencies can recoup holding costs by charging fees to owners who reclaim their animals and to people who adopt animals. In the case of an animal that is euthanized, there is no one to recoup costs from. This means that state funds are reimbursed in direct proportion to the number of animals euthanized – despite the Hayden Law’s express intent to end the euthanasia of adoptable and treatable animals.12

Since the commission’s decision, the annual budget cycle has produced contentious efforts to preserve those parts of the Hayden Law constituting mandates. Given difficult economic times and tight state budgets, the state has frequently suspended the reimbursable portions of the Hayden Law or has not appropriated funds to reimburse local governments for their claims. Since 2001, these portions of the Hayden Law have been unfunded and/or suspended five times over a cumulative seven years.

In 2012-13, the state’s Department of Finance estimated a savings associated with suspending or repealing the Hayden Law mandates of $62 million annually.13 While this figure is substantial, audits conducted over the last decade by the State Controller have reduced reimbursements to many local governments by an average of more than 50 percent.14

In his proposed 2012-13 budget, Governor Jerry Brown called for repeal of all unfunded mandates, including those that are part of the Hayden Law. The governor’s repeal proposal provoked rallies, meetings, petitions, constituent calls, and more. From the perspective of the state’s shelters, the repeal battle and similar efforts every year distract resources and time from efforts to seriously evaluate whether California’s animal sheltering laws and policies are achieving the policy preference for saving adoptable and treatable animals.

During the mid- to late 2000s, local governments were experiencing the same economic woes and budget threats as the state. Because public animal care and control activities are funded in large part by local general fund monies (e.g., allocations of taxpayer funds from the general “pot” of money collected by the local government, and not specific revenue generated by the agency for the purpose of delivering animal care and control services), cuts to budgets at the local level also seriously reduced services to help homeless animals across the state. In most cases, the loss of these local resources was far more devastating than the loss of the state reimbursement funding flowing from the Hayden Law mandate.

In mid-2012, the state legislature refused to repeal and instead again suspended the Hayden Law’s reimbursable provisions for another two years. But the repeal threat heightened the need to identify more productive and stable solutions.

Hayden Law timeline
1998  Hayden Law enacted
2001  Commission on State Mandates rules parts of Hayden Law are reimbursable mandates
2003  Legislature suspends the reimbursable sections of the Hayden Law for one year
2008  Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) report questions link between reimbursement methodology and policy goals
2009-2011 Legislature suspends the reimbursable sections of the Hayden Law
2009-2012 Many local governments cut funding for animal shelters significantly, due to the economic recession.
2012  Governor Brown proposes repeal
2012-2014 Legislature suspends the reimbursable sections of the Hayden Law

Stakeholders’ Group
The stakeholders’ group worked to identify approaches to help animals, while eliminating the reliance on unsustainable mandate-driven funding and the annual legislative battle that goes with it. The team included the following experienced professionals from multiple sectors of the animal protection field:

Jon Cicirelli – Director, San Jose Animal Care and Services
Jennifer Scarlett, DVM – Co-President, San Francisco SPCA
Jennifer Fearing – California Senior State Director, The Humane Society of the United States
Aimee Gilbreath – Executive Director, Found Animals Foundation
Eric Anderson, DVM – Director, San Luis Obispo County Animal Services
Ryan Drabek – Director, Orange County Animal Care
Leilani Fratis – Chief Executive Officer, Placer SPCA and President, State Humane Association of California
Lisa Carter – Executive Director, Santa Cruz SPCA and Humane Society
Julie Johnson – Executive Director, Bakersfield SPCA
Erica Hughes, Esq. – Executive Director, State Humane Association of California
Melanie Sadek – Executive Director, Valley Humane Society
Kristen Staggs – Board Member, Butte Humane Society
Rich Avanzino, Esq. – President, Maddie’s Fund
Christi Metropole – Executive Director, Stray Cat Alliance
Sherri Franklin – Executive Director, Muttville
Jill Buckley, Esq. – Senior Director, ASPCA
Kate Hurley, DVM, MPVM – Koret Shelter Medicine Program Director, UC Davis
The stakeholders' group:

- Evaluated what was working and what was not working for prevailing practices and approaches
- Developed new approaches
- Identified reliable and stable funding options to promote life-saving efforts

Four committees were formed to focus on: Intake Reduction, Shelter Standards and Practices, Cats, and Budget. Each committee met regularly to research, review, evaluate and discuss extensive data, reports, and laws. Selected examples include the following (see Appendix D for links to examples):

- California state laws - rabies regulations, spay/neuter statutes, Food and Agriculture and Penal Codes related to animals, Pet Shop Law, and SB 1785 (Hayden Law)
- California community regulations and data - local ordinances and enforcement activities, city and county reporting requirements, dog licensing by county, shelter reclaim rates, and a shelter survey administered by the stakeholders’ group
- Laws and model shelter programs in other states
- National data - animal code enforcement, spay/neuter requirements by state, frequency of lost dogs and cats in the US

These sources provided a fact-based foundation for the group's work. The members also gathered input and feedback from the boards of directors of the State Humane Association of California (SHAC) and the California Animal Control Directors Association (CACDA). At each step, the team vetted recommendations against three key questions:

- Does this change improve the potential for positive outcomes for animals?
- Will making the change result in a meaningful impact for animals?
- Is the impact significant enough to make implementation worth the effort?

The final recommendations and discussion represent only the consensus views of this stakeholder group. They do not represent complete consensus or agreement with or by other organizations, representatives, participants from public meetings or comments submitted.

**Recommended Best Practices and Legislative Recommendations**

The stakeholders' group arrived at 23 recommendations on practices seeking to first and foremost improve live outcomes for sheltered animals. The recommendations also focus on ideas to ease crowding, enhance animal welfare, decrease costs, and increase revenues. The recommendations provide an evidence-based, practical approach for communities and shelters to move more quickly toward ending the euthanasia of adoptable and treatable homeless animals. These approaches are not a one-size-fits-all prescription, but instead a flexible framework that local officials and others who care about animals can use to address differing realities and expectations in towns, cities, and counties across the state.

Despite the impetus for the stakeholder group’s work arising from state legislative and budget issues, the recommendations are not limited to just new proposed legislative recommendations. The unique opportunity presented by the formation, research and collaboration of the stakeholder group prompted the notion of offering additional best practices, which are approaches that
represent the appropriate minimum level of operations to which California animal care agencies should aspire. The stakeholders opted to include these as best practices because they are important to improving animal welfare, but did not propose legislating these as mandatory minimums out of concern for triggering additional state mandates. Rather than be silent, the group wanted to endorse these levels of service provision. Many of these best practice goals were also referenced in the legislative intent language for the Hayden Law when it was originally enacted.

The suggested legislative recommendations address misunderstandings of what is and is not permissible under current state law or suggest clarifications and potential changes that could better help California achieve its goal of ending the euthanasia of adoptable and treatable pets. These recommendations purposefully utilize authorizing/permissive language (e.g. “may”) rather than requirement language (e.g., “shall”) to give communities flexibility to pursue additional life-saving tactics that might currently be prohibited by state law.

The legislative changes proposed are to existing state law as codified. The stakeholders’ group affirms existing state law, except where changes are proposed within this white paper. That includes, for example, the increased holding periods, veterinary care and other requirements that are presently suspended. In plain words: the stakeholders’ group endorses the reinstatement of the Hayden Law provisions currently suspended, with the only exceptions being the ideas specifically recommended in this white paper for legislative change.

The recommendations follow, grouped by issue: intake reduction, standards and practices, cats, and budget. Discussion of each recommendation includes the problem that the stakeholders’ group sought to address, the rationale for the proposed approach, and the specific recommendation from the stakeholders’ group. Where helpful to clarify, information on the nature of the recommendation may provide additional description. In cases where one or more members of the stakeholders group expressed reservations or caveats, those perspectives appear in the appendix (Appendix C).

**Intake Reduction**

1. Problem(s) addressed
   a. Up to a third of public shelter intake comes from owners surrendering their pets.\(^{15}\)
   b. Most California public agencies accept owner-surrendered pets at any time the shelter is open. This makes it difficult for agencies to assess whether they have the capacity to place or hold the pet or whether they must euthanize animals to create space.
   c. Many owners do not realize that they may be able to solve problems that are causing them to surrender pets, using accessible information and resources. Many owners would be able to successfully and safely re-home their own pet with guidance and support.
   d. Owners also may not understand that the agency may euthanize their pet.

\(^{15}\)The amount of owner-surrender intake can range significantly for public agencies depending on whether there are also private humane organizations in the area. In a community with a private organization, many people surrender animals there, reducing the number coming into the public shelter.
Rationale for Recommendation

Some shelters require an appointment and/or counseling process to surrender pets, which has prompted a good number of owners to decide to keep their animals. Those owners are responding to information they get as part of the appointment/counseling process about available resources and support, such as spay/neuter services, low cost medical care, training, a food bank, etc., to address the issues they are experiencing. Although most California communities have these types of resources available, many pet owners simply do not know that they exist. Owners may also be more inclined to keep a pet, in spite of any issues, when they find out how likely it is that the animal will not be released alive. Owners may also be in a better position than a crowded shelter to re-home their pet, as they know their pet’s positive qualities and can exhibit the pet in a comfortable, accustomed habitat.

When some owners, nonetheless, choose to surrender pets, scheduled intake via appointments enables agencies to control the flow of animals into their shelters based on their capacity to care for and place the animals. For example, if at the time of surrender, the facility is full, or there are no possibilities of finding the animal a new home, the agency can decline to accept the pet. It is important to note that there is no California law requiring public shelters to accept owner-surrendered pets.

The agency can use the resources that would have gone toward taking and euthanizing the owned animal and instead use them for life-saving work to care for and place the animals it has already admitted, and/or to support owners with resources to manage retention or placement of the pet successfully outside the shelter system.

Even when a facility is not full, agencies can use scheduled intake via appointments to achieve better outcomes for animals. For example, if people can drop off pets at any time, a shelter may receive 30 animals one day and only two the next. This creates staffing inefficiencies and can raise operational costs. Even within a given day, too many animals could come in at once, creating a hurried process to manage them that stresses both pets and staff. If the agencies use scheduled intake via appointments to spread surrenders over a reasonable period, they can do more to work with owners to avoid the surrender, handle intake more smoothly, and have a steadier supply of animals to make available for adoption.

Agencies such as the Animal Humane Society in Minneapolis and the Oregon Humane Society in Portland have moved to an appointment-based surrender system. The programs have helped decrease euthanasia, as many owners find solutions to keep their animals at home and shelters are able to time intake of these relinquished pets to match their capacity to place them. For example, the Animal Humane Society experienced a 41 percent reduction in euthanasia in the first six months after implementing its appointment program.\(^\text{16}\) The appointments improve the surrender process for owners, shelter personnel, and the animals. The Oregon Humane Society

reports that scheduled surrenders take less time and owners are better prepared. Please see the resources appendix for a link to examples of practices from the Oregon Humane Society.

A scheduled intake via appointment-based surrender system also provides shelters with the chance to gather important information about the pet entering the shelter, such as the animal’s history and the reason for surrender. This information increases the likelihood that the agency will be able to find a successful placement for the animal.

**Nature of Recommendation**

Shelters should develop and utilize scheduled intake via appointment-based systems for owners wishing to surrender their animals.

- The agency schedules appointments to manage the flow of animals into the shelter for best results. This includes timing appointments to allow for working with the owner, taking in pets without creating undue stress, and receiving animals in numbers and at times that maximize the likelihood of finding homes for surrendered pets.
- As part of that process, the agency connects owners with resources to motivate and help them to keep or re-home the pet. The agency determines whether to take the pet based on its capacity to adopt out or transfer the animal for placement. (See the next recommendation for providing resources and choosing whether to accept the animal even in the absence of a scheduled appointment.)

**Recommendation**

**Best practice:** Utilize a scheduled intake via appointment system for admitting owner surrender animals. Preserve the option for immediate intake of such animals when an evaluation determines an urgent situation or risk to the animal or community.

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations and rescue groups that take in animals from owners.

It is important to distinguish this recommendation from a traditional “limited intake” shelter model. According to the National Federation of Humane Societies the common industry definitions for Limited Admission and Open Admission Shelters are:

- **Limited Admission Shelter** – An agency that may accept companion animals on a voluntary and/or space available basis. Admissions may be subject to health and/or temperament criteria, or any other criteria that the agency may so designate based on its mission.
- **Open Admission Shelter** – An agency that must accept or chooses to accept, any and all companion animals regardless of health, temperament or space available, with no limitation.

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18 References to "private humane organizations" include to all SPCAs, humane societies and rescue groups that perform the activity or activities discussed.

19 The National Federation of Humane Societies http://www.humanefederation.org/Definitions.cfm
Since there is no California law requiring public shelters to accept owner-surrendered pets, communities operating in an Open Admission model are doing so by their choice usually under local ordinance, under the terms of a contract, or as a local policy preference.

This recommendation seeks to expand intake policy options beyond the two extremes of Limited Admission and Open Admission by offering a third option – Scheduled Intake. Scheduled Intake for owner-surrendered animals (via an appointment process) as recommended above is primarily designed to manage the timing of animal intake, not the quantity of animal intake. By requiring an appointment to surrender an animal, a shelter can manage the flow of animals into the shelter for best results. This includes timing appointments to allow for working with the owner, taking in pets without creating undue stress, and receiving animals in numbers and at times that maximize the likelihood of finding homes for surrendered pets.

Shelters that have moved to Scheduled Intake for owner surrender animals have experienced the additional benefit of overall intake reduction as owners utilize the information and resources provided during the appointment process to find solutions that keep the pet in its original home or find a placement outside of the shelter system.

Shelters may also choose, at their discretion, to explicitly use Scheduled Intake for owner surrendered animals as a stepping stone to a Managed Intake or Limited Admission policy. Some California shelters already limit or eliminate owner surrender during periods when the shelter is full and intake of additional animals would require animals already in the shelter’s care to be euthanized to make space.

2. Problem(s) addressed
   a. People surrendering animals to shelters may not be aware of or have sought out resources that would help them keep their animals in their home. They may keep their animals if they knew about these resources.
   b. Owners who surrender animals to shelters may be overly optimistic about the chance their pet has to find a new home. If they had a more realistic view, they might be more likely to develop strategies for keeping the pet or finding a home for them on their own.
   c. When owners surrender animals, they often do not provide information on why they are doing so or information about that pet’s history that would be valuable to the agency or a future adopter.

Rationale for Recommendation
Regardless of whether they require a surrender appointment (see prior recommendation), many shelters accept owner-surrendered animals without requiring any information on the owners’ or animals’ circumstance. Having owners complete an assessment to provide this information prior to, or at the time of, surrender allows shelters to:
   • Refer owners to resources and support that may address issues that they are experiencing and motivate them to keep their animals (Please see the resources appendix for links to detailed responses that the Nevada Humane Society uses to

work with callers and help them avoid relinquishing their pets. Additional examples of documentation used by Richmond SPCA for surrender counseling and intake forms are also included in the resources appendix.

- Determine the likely outcome for the animals if they enter the shelter and share the potential for euthanasia with owners.
- Understand and communicate how best to care for the animals and find homes for them.
- Identify what medical and behavioral resources the animals will need while in the care of the shelter.
- Decide how to best promote the animals for placement.
- Provide the best possible information to rescue groups or adopters.

Given that owners surrendering their pets are asking the shelter to take on the burden of holding, placing, transferring, or euthanizing the animal, having them participate in a brief assessment is a small request.

**Resources**

Shelters can use information from assessments to refer owners to resources and support that might keep pets in homes. Information on relevant topics, such as spay/neuter services, veterinary care, training, pet-friendly housing, and pet food banks, can help owners solve perceived problems that are causing them to consider giving up the pet. Shelters then save money and time by not having to take in the animal and can invest instead in other life-saving efforts.

The Humane Society of the United States shares the following examples of how encouragement and resources from a humane organization have helped people retain their animals:

- A woman called a help line because she felt overwhelmed with her husband in the hospital and the dog creating a mess at home. She learned how a "puppy pen" could limit the area the dog was affecting. Though she did not get the pen, the counselor's care and guidance motivated her to keep the animal. A week later, she was horrified she had even considered relinquishing the family pet.
- A man temporarily staying with friends was not allowed to bring his two cats because the friends thought the cats would shed all over the apartment and damage furniture. He got help to borrow an extra-large dog crate and was able to use it to keep the cats in the apartment until he found his own pet-friendly place to live.
- A woman struggled to manage a large, energetic dog. He was difficult to walk, chewing up her home, and jumping all over her. She thought she had to turn him in. However, after getting a referral and working with a trainer, she realized, "He wants to be good and do the right thing," and kept him.

When Downtown Dog Rescue launched an intervention program at the South Los Angeles shelter they discovered that most pet owners bringing animals to the shelter do not want to give up their pets, rather they lack information and access to the resources and support that would

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help them address the issues they are experiencing. In the first two months of the program over 80 percent of the pet owners intercepted were willing to keep their pets with the resources and support provided by Downtown Dog Rescue. From April – December 2013 the Downtown Dog Rescue Surrender Intervention Program at the South Los Angeles Shelter supported over 2,000 pets. The most commonly needed services were – spay/neuter, financial support, housing assistance or problem solving, humane euthanasia for senior pets, and behavioral support. An important finding of this program is that in the South Los Angeles community the primary driver of a family feeling the need to surrender their pet to the shelter is poverty, not a lack of affection for the pet.

Likely outcome
Information on each pet's history, condition, and circumstances help the shelter provide an individualized estimate of the likelihood the animal will face euthanasia if surrendered. Even in the absence of an assessment, information on the potential for euthanasia, based on the type of animal, the shelter's euthanasia rate, and its current number and mix of animals, can help owners in the surrender decision-making process. Faced with an honest evaluation of an animal’s prospects for leaving the shelter alive, more people may decide against turning in the pet, which is often a better outcome for the animal.

Care
For owners who still relinquish their pets, the assessment responses may also suggest how shelters should care for the animals they do accept and how to best promote them to potential adopters. This information is also important to help adopters provide appropriate care. For example, if an agency learns a dog is fearful, shelter personnel can tell a new adopter to be careful about introducing the animal to strangers. If a dog is good with cats, but should not be left alone with them, that background is helpful to integrate the dog into a home with cats around.

For shelters, implementing an assessment can be straightforward. Even facilities that may feel too busy to conduct physical exams or engage in lengthy conversations with owners can have people fill out forms that provide vital information. There are many current examples of forms and practices that are successful throughout the country (see the resources appendix for links to sample forms as well as information on conducting interviews).

Nature of Recommendation
- Before accepting owner-surrendered animals, agencies should ask for information about pets and the circumstances of relinquishment.

22 Downtown Dog Rescue, We’ve Reached our Year End Goal in Only 2 Months!, http://www.downtowndogrescue.org/weve-reached-our-year-end-goal-in-only-2-months/ (accessed July 2013).
• Shelters should provide owners with referrals to available information and resources (e.g., spay/neuter, veterinary, training, pet-friendly housing, pet food bank, etc.) that could assist in addressing the issues driving the desire to surrender.

• Agencies should provide owners with an honest evaluation of their pets’ prospects for live release if surrendered, based on an assessment of the individual pet, if possible, or, if not, based on the shelter’s overall live release rates or their outcomes for that specific type of animal (i.e. adult cat).

• Shelters can provide resources, conduct assessments, and tell people about the potential for euthanasia without moving to a scheduled appointment process (prior recommendation). Ideally, however, agencies would suggest resources before a scheduled appointment and do assessments before or during appointments. Therefore, these recommendations work best together with a scheduled appointment process. Agencies may wish to implement these owner-surrender related recommendations in phases or all at once.

**Recommendation**

**Best practice:** As a requirement to schedule a surrender appointment or to surrender a pet where no appointment system is in place, owners participate in a short assessment (by phone, online, or in person) to gather information about the pet and identify what issues are driving the desire to surrender. Based on this assessment, agencies give owners an honest appraisal of the likely outcome for their pet if it enters the shelter (adoption vs. euthanasia). Where possible, agencies should refer pet owners to resources and support that would help them address the pet owner’s concerns or issues and keep the pet in the home.

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations, including rescue groups, that take in animals from owners.

**Standards and Practices**

3. Problem(s) addressed

   a. Many agencies and members of the public mistakenly believe that shelters are legally obligated to take in all animals brought to them.

   b. Agencies may also take animals because they feel pressure from the public, other staff members, and their own moral sense of “what's right.”

   c. As a result, many shelters are admitting more animals than they can effectively care for or place, devoting scarce resources to efforts that do not produce positive outcomes.

   - Taking in too many animals reduces their quality of life. If shelter animals live in crowded conditions, they will suffer stress and become diseased. Sick animals incur more costs for care and are less likely to find homes.

   - The sheer number of animals coming in at a point in time dooms many of them to euthanasia, whether they are sick or healthy.

   - Some of the euthanized animals are likely pet cats that spend time outdoors and would have returned home on their own if not admitted.

   d. When agencies incur costs managing excess animals, those funds are not available to help place other animals or promote preventive efforts, such as spay/neuter.
Rationale for Recommendation

State law requires shelters to take in some animals, such as dangerous, sick, injured, orphaned, and quarantined animals. However, the widespread assumption that shelters always "have to" accept every animal is not true. Agencies have discretion in admitting many of the animals that arrive at their facilities. For example, the state does not require them to take in healthy stray cats or owner-surrendered animals.

It is also not true that shelters "should" admit every animal. In many cases, bringing an animal into the shelter may mean a worse outcome for that animal and/or for the animals already in the facility, as this story from a shelter worker illustrates:

*She was a stray, domestic long-haired blue cream tortoiseshell, who was brought to our shelter 29 days ago. She was a very pretty cat. She loved kittens. She didn’t have any with her when she came in, but when she was allowed out of her cage for exercise, she would run up to the cages with kittens in them and try to clean them by licking them.... On the days that our shelter was closed, I’d let her out of the cage to stretch out on my desk and she’d try to play with my pen while I tried to do my paperwork. Two weeks ago, she became the cat who had been at our shelter the longest, so I had her photographed and made her ‘Pet of the Week’ in our local newspaper. Unfortunately not one person called... No one cared that she was beautiful. No one cared that she got along with dogs and cats. No one cared that she was young or that she had silky fur, or that she liked to clean kittens, or stretch out on a desk or play with a pen... *

...Today, when other unwanted cats came through our door filling our cat room beyond capacity, I lovingly took her life.*

Admitting healthy dogs and cats solely to euthanize them, to keep them in stressful, crowded conditions, or to euthanize another animal already in the shelter does not serve animals, shelters, or the public. It consumes resources that agencies can use to help animals by promoting licensing, adoption, spay-neuter, and other life-saving efforts.

This is especially true for cats. With the statewide euthanasia rate for cats in excess of 70 percent in 2010, it is clear that most cats entering California animal shelters will not leave alive. Many are free-roaming, ownerless animals that were healthy and thriving in the community. Returning those cats to where they were found is not abandonment – and in fact, is more likely than not to

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save their lives. Others may be pets that spend time outdoors, and are not considered missing. For those that may have wandered off or be lost, data suggests their best hope is to stay outside of the shelter system in most communities.

According to national surveys, 60 percent\textsuperscript{28} to 66 percent\textsuperscript{29} of cats that were recovered after going missing simply returned home on their own. Admitting them to shelters means they will most likely be euthanized or, at best, adopted into another home, especially since owners rarely look for their cats at shelters within the shelter's holding period. Owners reclaim only 2 percent of cats entering public shelters. Cats are also more susceptible to stress-related diseases from being in the shelter. Bringing in too many cats, therefore, can cause many or all of the cats in the shelter to suffer.

\textit{Because so many cats coming into California's shelters face euthanasia and the numbers are not improving, the subcommittee focusing on this important issue has developed recommendations and included reference materials specific to cats. This information appears in a later section of this paper and in the resources appendix.}

Agencies should choose an appropriate level of intake, which may include refusing to admit some animals, to ensure a higher level of care, provide a better quality of life, and focus more on finding homes. Whether it is better to admit an animal or not depends on that animal's immediate risks, health and behavior, the number and mix of animals already in the shelter, and the shelter's ability to find a home for the animal. For example, an agency may have more positive impact by declining to accept some healthy stray cats in order to have capacity to admit more house-cats, kittens, and dogs that have a better chance for placement.

For California’s shelters to meaningfully reach the state’s policy goal of ending the euthanasia of healthy adoptable homeless animals, they must shift priorities - from repositories for unwanted animals, to safe havens for animals in need. To do that, shelters must work within their capacity to maintain safe and humane conditions.

The \textit{Reasonable Practices Forum}\textsuperscript{30} report published by the American Humane Association (AHA) and \textit{Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters}\textsuperscript{31} from the Association of Shelter Veterinarians provide guidance to shelters on what constitutes humane conditions and how to achieve them. In 1999, California shelter leaders worked with the AHA to develop the \textit{Reasonable Practices Forum} content, in order to address unclear sections of the Hayden Law. However, the Hayden Law neither covers all aspects of shelter care nor calls for the highest level of care that shelters can reasonably provide. This

paper, therefore, also references the ASV report, a national effort to provide detail on the best practices in caring for shelter animals. (See the Resources appendix for links to both publications.\textsuperscript{vii})

Managing intake is one of several recommendations the stakeholders' group makes that are consistent with counsel in these sources.

\textit{Nature of Recommendation}
\begin{itemize}
  \item Shelters should exercise discretion regarding which animals they admit, unless they are legally obligated to take in an animal.
  \item When deciding to take in additional animals, they should consider the impact on animals already in the facility.
\end{itemize}

\textit{Recommendation}
\textbf{Best practice:} Shelters should balance optional intake with their proven capacity to maintain humane conditions and positive outcomes for new intakes and the animals in their care.

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations, including rescue groups, that take in animals.

4. Problem(s) addressed
\begin{itemize}
  \item Failure to maintain sanitary conditions in animal shelters can spread disease and compromise health and welfare.
  \item Current state laws governing shelter conditions need to be updated to reflect current knowledge and research.
\end{itemize}

\textit{Rationale for Recommendation}
Providing quality care and accommodation is essential for any animal shelter. The Association of Shelter Veterinarians describes quality of care issues based on \textit{The Five Freedoms}\textsuperscript{32} originally established in the United Kingdom for farm animal welfare, but easily translatable to the care of cats and dogs, and other shelter pets:

\textbf{Freedom from Hunger and Thirst}
By ready access to fresh water and diet to maintain health and vigor

\textbf{Freedom from Discomfort}
By providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area

\textbf{Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease}
By prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment

\textbf{Freedom to Express Normal Behavior}
By providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal’s own kind

\textbf{Freedom from Fear and Distress}
By ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{The Five Freedoms}, http://www.sheltervet.org/about/shelter-standards/five-freedoms/ (accessed July 2013).
California’s pet stores are legally required to maintain appropriate conditions that reflect these freedoms. The Hayden Law addresses some standards and practices, but they are not comprehensive or well defined and many can be found in the legislative intend associated with the passage of that law. It is not practical to add standards and practices substance to the Hayden Law, which remains a suspended and unfunded mandate. Instead, this best practice recommendation and the ones that follow on other standards and practices address what the stakeholders’ group thought was most important emphasize and what a community would reasonably expect of its sheltering agency.

Agencies may refer to the AHA Reasonable Practices Forum and the ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters for detailed ideas or definitions on maintaining conditions in their facilities.

**Recommendation**

**Best practice:** Maintain the facilities used for the keeping of animals in a sanitary condition.

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations, including rescue groups, that take in animals.

5. Problem(s) addressed

a. Improper heating and ventilation can cause animal suffering and the spread of disease.

b. The Hayden Law includes language pertaining to shelter conditions, but the requirements are not specific and do not reflect developments in shelter care since 1998.

**Rationale for Recommendation**

Maintaining appropriate temperatures and airflow are part of humane treatment for shelter animals. Although the Hayden Law includes requirements for keeping resident animals thriving, the language needs clarification. In addition, new approaches for kennel management have emerged from research and practice in the 15 years since the law passed.

Agencies can find assistance on managing heating and ventilation in the *Reasonable Practices Forum* report and ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters. For example, the ASV report includes a section on heating, ventilation, and air quality to assist shelters in providing temperature and humidity levels that enable animals to maintain the proper body temperature. Agencies can use this information and other guidance in the two reports to provide comfort to sheltered animals and reduce the likelihood that they will become sick, lessening their chances of finding homes.

**Recommendation**

**Best practice:** Provide proper heating and ventilation for the facilities used for the keeping of animals.

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This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations, including rescue groups, that take in animals.

6. Problem(s) addressed
   a. Standards of care vary throughout the state.
   b. The Hayden Law includes that agencies shall "have a duty to provide [animals] with necessary and prompt veterinary care, nutrition, and shelter," but does not spell out specific requirements.

Rationale for Recommendation
Reasonable care of admitted animals honors public sentiment and aligns with other legal efforts toward humane treatment, such as California’s Pet Store Law. Fresh, clean water and proper food along with efforts to reduce the animals' stress are surely a baseline expectation for any sheltering organization.

Local agencies have a legal obligation to take in sick or injured homeless animals. It would not make sense for the law to require the intake of these animals only to let them suffer. Failure to care for sick animals can also lead to their spreading disease to other shelter residents, reducing the number that leave shelters alive.

The impact can extend beyond the agency walls and damage the reputation of the shelter system. Animals that are or appear sickly undermine the public's confidence in adoption. Robust animals are more likely to find homes and encourage other prospective pet parents to visit California's animal care agencies.


Recommendation
Best practice: Provide adequate nutrition, humane care and treatment, and timely and reasonable care to prevent disease and suffering for all animals under the shelter’s care as well as veterinary care to injured and ill animals to minimize disease and suffering.

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations, including rescue groups, that take in animals.

7. Problem(s) addressed
   a. Animals with insufficient space or enrichment activities experience stress, suffer, become sick, and/or develop behavioral abnormalities that reduce their chances for adoption.

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Rationale for Recommendation
Sanitation, environmental conditions, food, water, and veterinary care are essential for animals' physical well-being. Space and enrichment are equally crucial for their psychological well-being.

The Reasonable Practices Forum report and ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters provide information on best practices relating to space and enrichment. Appropriate socialization, physical activities, and mental stimulation make for happier, healthier animals. They are more likely to find homes and be good ambassadors for the shelter system.

Recommendation
Best practice: Provide adequate space and enrichment appropriate to the size, weight, and species of animals.

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations, including rescue groups, that take in animals.

8. Problem(s) addressed
   a. Before the passage of the Hayden Law, not all shelters kept lists of lost and found animals.
   b. As a result, some owners and animals probably were not reunited that could have been.

Rationale for Recommendation
Helping reunite animals and owners is an essential function for shelters. Lists or other systems to record missing pets and animals taken to animal shelters are among the simplest, most cost-effective methods to do so. This information demands little effort or equipment to collect. Though most agencies continue to have some system to maintain listings, this recommendation reinforces the value of doing so.

Recommendation
Best practice: State law should continue to require shelters to maintain "Lost and Found" systems.

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations that take in animals.

9. Problem(s) addressed
   a. Shelters use varied and often incomplete methods to describe the animals in their facilities and the veterinary care they have given them.
   b. Lack of standardized data can be a barrier to transferring animals for placement and/or negatively affect animals transferred to rescue groups. For example, an organization receiving a dog or cat for placement may not have the best information to care for the animal, to engage potential adopters, and to help the adopter provide the best care for the new pet.
**Rationale for Recommendation**

Consistent documentation practices facilitate the transfer of animals between shelters and to rescues and pet adopters. It should not be difficult for agencies to capture basic descriptive information on each animal, known as "signalment." Signalment includes name, species, breed or mix, color, age, and sexual status (spayed or neutered, male or female), as best as the shelter can determine.

Standardized tracking should include not only descriptive factors but also medical care. When shelters maintain clear, consistent records of veterinary treatments, animals can benefit from continuity of care, if needed, with rescue groups and in the home. The process also creates records that may be useful to private veterinarians in providing lifelong service to these adopted dogs and cats.

**Recommendation**

*Best practice:* The documentation of signalment and medical care for all animals should be standardized. Please see the resources appendix for link to a full example of what this should include. viii

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations, including rescue groups, that take in animals.

10. Problem(s) addressed

a. When shelters delay working with rescue groups to place animals that may not otherwise find homes the number ultimately adopted can decrease.

**Rationale for Recommendation**

Taking early action to divert animals from probable euthanasia to rescue groups deserves to be common practice. When agencies wait until the end of the holding period to begin the process of coordinating with rescue groups, they may create unreasonable deadlines for rescue groups to save animals. For example, the rescue group may have only 12 to 24 hours before the shelter euthanizes the animal. In some cases that limited amount of time is not feasible for the rescue group to take the animal for placement.

In addition, the longer animals linger in shelters, the more likely they are to get sick and become less suitable for adoption or transfer. Shelters can save more lives by resolving to partner with rescue groups and contacting them as early as possible for potential transfers. When shelters give more notice, including what animals are becoming available and when they will be released, rescues can determine if they will have space; arrange foster care, if needed; and begin to promote the dogs and cats for adoption.

For the partnership to benefit animals, the transfers should include dogs, cats, and other animals that the rescue is in a better position to place. These animals may need additional time or investment for health or behavior issues that the shelter cannot provide, but a rescue organization can. Sometimes an agency may just seek relief from the sheer number of incoming animals. If
the agency is confident in its ability to place an animal quickly, however, it is under no obligation to transfer that animal.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) designation as a nonprofit organization – 501(c)(3) – need not be a prerequisite to a rescue group or individual being a valuable placement partner. Agencies should determine whether any rescue partner, regardless of nonprofit status, could function effectively to accept transfers.

Nature of Recommendation

- Shelters should collaborate with rescue groups.
  - Rescue organizations and individuals do not have to hold 501(c)3 status.
  - Shelters should develop a rescue agreement that promotes good communication and other best practices for animal care, designed to improve live outcomes for animals.
  - Shelters should maintain a system, such as a listserv (opt-in email list), to notify rescue groups of animals that need placement.
  - Rescue groups and individuals should join the system(s) for the shelter(s) with which they would like to partner and monitor for animals they can place.
  - Shelters and rescue groups should work together to define and share what factors produce a successful collaboration. For example, shelters should maintain the system of available animals and update it frequently. Rescue partners should show up on time when they have committed to take and place an animal.

Please see the resources appendix for links to registration and agreement samples for a rescue group to work with a shelter.ix

Recommendation

Best practice: Shelters and rescue partners should work collaboratively to increase the utilization of transfer opportunities as early as possible after intake. This should include setting clear expectations for both parties. Shelters may release animals to non-501(c)3 registered rescue organizations or individuals.

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations that take in animals.

11. Problem(s) addressed

a. The holding period in current law was intended to make it possible for owners to reclaim lost pets. However, the regulations treat all situations the same, even those where no one is likely to be coming for the animals, and holding them longer for purposes of owner redemption does not benefit them.

b. Holding animals at the shelter consumes resources for food and care.

c. The age definition for puppies in the current law is unclear.
Rationale for Recommendation
Current law allows that when owners surrender puppies or kittens, shelters may immediately move them to adoption or transfer for placement. The law does not provide the same ability with stray animals. These animals must remain in the facility for the full holding period, slowing their potential move into homes. Additional time in the shelter can sometimes lead to sickness and always requires shelter resources for food and care.

This recommendation pertains to puppies, while a later recommendation discusses kittens. Results for Los Angeles Animal Services suggest that owners reclaim very few puppies. For unweaned puppies (those still subsisting on mother's milk), 6,082 entered Los Angeles city shelters from July 2008 to December 2012, and only 72 were returned to owners (less than 2 percent).35

This recommendation to remove holding periods for positive outcomes (not for euthanasia) for stray puppies pertains only to litters of three or more entering the shelter from the same location. One or two puppies may, in fact, be lost and should remain subject to the current holding period before adoption or transfer, to give owners a chance to claim their puppies. However, when three or more come in together, it's unlikely that they are lost. They are likely abandoned or the offspring of strays, in which case no one is coming for them. The best action is, therefore, to pursue any opportunities to find homes or non-shelter options for puppies as quickly as possible.

This recommendation uses four months as the delineation for puppies and dogs, because that is when they lose their deciduous incisors (baby teeth). If a puppy has any adult teeth, it is more than four months old.

Recommendation
Legal requirement: Litters of puppies (defined as three or more from the same location under the age of four months) that are surrendered or stray may be available immediately for adoption or transfer. They may not be euthanized until after expiration of the Hayden Law holding period requirements (Food and Agricultural Code Sec 31108) (with current medical exceptions).

12. Problem(s) addressed
   a. Longer holding periods have only marginally improved rates of owner redemption of dogs.
   b. Holding dogs without identification can expose them to potential sickness, slow or reduce their movement into homes, and use shelter resources that could be directed elsewhere.

Rationale for Recommendation
The Hayden Law mandated holding periods in shelters to provide more time for owners to reclaim lost pets. Unfortunately, this change does not appear to have significantly improved the number of animals that return home after entering shelters. From 1998, the year the Hayden Law

passed, to 2010, the proportion of dogs entering shelters that were reclaimed rose only 3 percent, from 16 percent to 19 percent.\textsuperscript{36}

This small gain includes dogs with and without identification. Dogs with identification (e.g., collar with tags and/or microchip) return home at a much higher rate than those without identification.

According to a study done in Ohio, dogs wearing a license tag had a higher likelihood of recovery.\textsuperscript{37} Dogs not wearing identification would benefit from opportunities for adoption or transfer for placement. Shelters should be able to move quickly to achieve these positive outcomes. If no positive outcome is available, such dogs would have to remain in the shelter for the full holding period before any dog could be euthanized.

A survey of seven California sheltering agencies showed that over 80 percent of animals reclaimed by their owners are picked up within the first four days (detail in Resources appendix\textsuperscript{x}).

Shorter holding periods for live release to an adopter or rescue group in the absence of identification will create an additional incentive for owners to make sure the pet is wearing identification. Knowing that a pet with identification will be held longer in the shelter before being adopted or transferred could motivate some people to take this important step for the safety of their animals and for the benefit of the community. Shelters incur significant expenses – and utilize limited holding space – when they hold dogs for the presumed owner who never comes to claim their pet.

\textbf{Nature of Recommendation}

If a dog does not have identification, the shelter \textbf{may} move toward adoption or transfer after 72 hours. Shelters shall not euthanize until after expiration of the Hayden Law holding period (existing medical exceptions would apply). Maintaining the full Hayden Law holding period (as described in Food and Agricultural Code Section 31108) for all dogs with identification continues to make sense to maximize the likelihood of reuniting these animals with their owners.

This recommendation does not \textbf{require} shelters to move dogs without identification to positive outcomes more quickly, but would authorize local communities and agencies to do so. It would not permit shelters to euthanize dogs without identification more quickly.


Recommendation

Legal requirement: Dogs without identification may be moved through the process toward a positive outcome (i.e. adoption, transfer); after 72 hours; dogs with identification shall be held for the full Hayden Law holding period as described in Food and Agricultural Code Section 31108 and then made available for any outcome (with current medical exceptions).

Cats

For years shelters have treated both dogs and cats mostly the same, with animals coming into the shelter, remaining for some time to allow owners to reclaim them, and then being adopted, transferred or euthanized. This model seems to work much better for dogs. Shelters have refined some of their practices, and results from 1998 to 2010 show substantial progress on dog intake, adoptions, and euthanasia.

However, intake and euthanasia for cats has worsened over the same time frame.38 There are several possible reasons for this:

- There is a large population of free-roaming, ownerless cats.
- In a given year, shelters handle only about 3 percent of the total estimated cat population in California, which is a mix of free-roaming animals and pets.39

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38 Much of the information in this section on cats is a subset of papers and presentations that are more comprehensive, such as "Making the Case for a Paradigm Shift in Community Cat Management" by Dr. Kate Hurley, Director of the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program, http://www.maddiesfund.org/Maddies_Institute/Webcasts/Making_the_Case_for_Community_Cats_Part_One.html and http://www.maddiesfund.org/Maddies_Institute/Webcasts/Making_the_Case_for_Community_Cats_Part_Two.html

39 Kate Hurley and Jon Cicirelli, Free Roaming Cats, UC Davis Shelter Medicine Program & San Jose Animal Control, (2013).
• In most California communities there is no requirement that owners confine cats to their property or keep cats on a leash.
• A significant portion of owned cats roam at large.
• Owners expect their cats to wander. When cats do not return, even for several days, many owners do not look for them. They may believe the cats will return home on their own or that they have run off, decided to live somewhere else, or met with an unfortunate demise.
• Despite the extended holding period required by the Hayden Law, the percentage of cats coming into shelters that owners reclaim remained steady at only 2 percent from 1998 to 2010. This level of owner reclaims is consistent with national numbers.
• Owners are correct that many cats considered missing come back on their own. In two national surveys, cats were found to be at least 13 times more likely to return home by means other than the shelter.
• Time spent in the shelter usually has a more adverse effect on cats and their welfare than it does for dogs. Cats are more likely than dogs to suffer from stress-related illness, which may result in costly treatment or euthanasia.
• According to a national survey, 4 in 10 owners reported obtaining cats from friends and relatives. With so many cats available through social contacts, people are less likely to turn to shelters to adopt.

Because the situation and results for cats are so different, reducing the number euthanized requires consideration of a number of different approaches. Most people working in animal welfare today agree that the best situation for domestic cats in our society is living indoors as companions. Humanely reducing or eliminating free roaming/feral/community cats is a goal we all share. It cannot be emphasized enough that the conclusion is that the funds currently spent on housing and killing healthy feral/community cats should be spent on non-lethal programs aimed at reducing outdoor cat populations. The recommendations pertaining to cats include management practices that will increase positive outcomes for cats in shelters and the community, while also reducing the number of free-roaming reproductive cats outside.

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It is important to be clear that the following recommendations about cats are **not** an effort to convince or require shelters to refuse to take in cats at all. Rather, the stakeholders’ group is offering solutions to two of the most significant cat-related challenges that shelters confront:

- How does a shelter reduce the number of cats entering the shelter system?
- How does a shelter do a better job of helping the ones that are in the system?

There is no “one size fits all” solution, and anyone can find an exception warranting a deviation from a recommendation. For example, in rare situations dogs and cats die under anesthesia while undergoing spay/neuter. Does this mean spay/neuter surgeries should be abandoned? Of course not. The stakeholders’ group recommendations include programs that have consistently worked in communities where they were implemented and have improved circumstances for cats in those diverse communities.

It is also important to clarify that the stakeholders’ group is **not recommending** that shelters discontinue services for cats. These recommendations are designed to reduce and eliminate the euthanasia of healthy cats, regardless of their perceived temperament. All agencies are bound by law to take in and help the sick and injured, quarantined, abandoned, and orphaned kittens without maternal care. Additionally, shelters should recognize when an animal might actually be in danger and need intervention. These are the most vulnerable cats and must be prioritized. But many cats in shelters do not fall into one of these critical categories. In some communities, there are adequate programs in place to provide good outcomes for the cats that are flowing into their shelters. These communities typically are active in their support for spay/neuter, TNR, adoption programs, robust volunteer and foster programs and they have good relationships with local rescue networks. For these higher performing communities, significant changes in cat programs may not be needed. However, in the majority of communities in California, the outcomes for cats in shelters are quite poor. For those communities, alternative solutions should be tried. It doesn’t cost more money or staff to tell a citizen that: “The shelter is full today. If we take in your cat, that means another cat will have to die to make space. You can try back later. Here is a list of other resources/rehoming suggestions, spay/neuter services etc. you can try.”

13. Problem(s) addressed

- Confusion exists regarding state law requirements pertaining to admitting cats.
- Many healthy cats admitted to shelters must be quickly euthanized, or another healthy cat already in the facility faces euthanasia to make room for the new animal.
- Admitting healthy cats solely to euthanize them, or euthanizing other cats already in the shelter to make space for a new cat, is a disservice to the animals, a poor use of limited shelter resources, and an ineffective activity to support with public funding.

**Rationale for Recommendation**

State law does not require agencies to take in healthy stray or owned cats. The common assumption that taking an animal into the shelter is the best outcome is not true for cats in most communities.

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Lost pet cats are more likely to get home on their own – 60 percent to 66 percent of those recovered in national surveys, compared with fewer than 4 percent returning with shelter assistance. Given the high rate of cat euthanasia in most shelters, a cat entering has a low probability of surviving.

Therefore, in most circumstances a stray pet cat has better odds outside the shelter system.

For ownerless, free-roaming cats, entering the shelter almost always has a worse outcome than remaining in their accustomed habitat. Cats that appear feral or fractious upon entering shelters are almost uniformly euthanized. Despite the assumptions made by some in animal welfare, most outdoor cats do not live tragic lives, research demonstrates that stray cats that are healthy and have good body weight, are thriving in their current situation. For example:

- Fewer than 1 percent of more than 100,000 cats at trap-neuter-return clinics needed to be euthanized for humane reasons.
- Fewer than 10 percent of cats entering shelters are sick or injured.
- Up to 90 percent of semi-owned cats survive annually, as do approximately 50 percent of unowned cats (both of which are better survival rates than the 30 percent CA state average in shelters).

There is no state mandate for local governments to control populations of healthy stray cats. The cat holding periods enacted by the Hayden Law remain unfunded and suspended, and the original 72-hour holding period is also a state mandate that has been unfunded since 1981. In addition, a public opinion survey showed that 81 percent of people thought the proper response to unowned cats in the streets was to "leave the cats alone," when the alternative was lethal control. State law also does not require an agency to euthanize a cat simply because it has been admitted to the shelter and cannot be placed in a new home.

Some animal welfare/control experts believe that refusing to allow the entry of a cat into a shelter is a failure of the public duty to accept all cats brought to the shelter. In shelters with high cat euthanasia (which include most of the Open Admission shelters in California), it is not very convincing to assert that the cat or the community is best served by euthanizing a healthy cat, just to make room for more healthy cats that will be euthanized. The volume of cats entering any given shelter each year relative to the total cat population is so small that removing them cannot impact the larger community of cats in the long term. The policy/practice of taking in far more cats than the shelter system can accommodate and then euthanizing the excess (70 percent, on average), is not in alignment with reality. We must ask what tangible positive difference such

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47 State Commission on Mandates - Detention of Stray Cats claim # SB90-3948

practices produce. The stakeholders did not find any studies, data, research, or surveys that demonstrate that the continued practice of excess shelter admission and high euthanasia improves the overall community for cats or people. One ecologically significant exception to this may be on small islands; however, California is not that type of environment and those results have not been duplicated in any non-island setting.

Declining to take in healthy cats when euthanasia will result enables shelters to divert resources from these admissions to efforts that do more to help animals, such as by increasing spay/neuter and adoption. They might work to admit and place more dogs by accepting fewer cats for which most likely outcome is euthanasia. They may choose to invest in spaying healthy strays that arrive at the shelter and returning them to their community, thereby helping to control the feral cat population more effectively than euthanizing individuals.

The stakeholders’ group found that in community after community where scheduled intake was performed in one capacity or another, the residents were resourceful and capable at finding alternate solutions to surrender. Given simple pre-printed instructions, resources, and suggestions, many people solve their own cat problem. Not only does this help the shelter today, but it will help tomorrow because the resident has been empowered.

San Jose, CA; Albuquerque, NM; and Jacksonville, FL are a few of many communities that have decided to redirect funds that would have been spent on the sheltering and euthanasia process to programs promoting the practice of Trap, Neuter, and Return (TNR), in which agencies spay or neuter healthy stray and feral cats and then return them back to the location from which they originated.

Between March 2010 and January 2012, San Jose altered and returned 4,000 cats that had been turned into the shelter as feral. Cat euthanasia declined by 40 percent. Cat intake fell from approximately 11,000 in 2009 to 9,000 in 2011. The cost to spay or neuter and return each cat was about the same as what the city was spending to house and care for animals for a week and then euthanize them.49

Where municipalities have shifted from euthanasia to TNR, they have not seen increases in problems associated with stray and feral cats. On the contrary, TNR practices can stabilize or decrease the size of the community cat colonies. Because of the difficulty in counting free-roaming cats, there are few studies measuring the decline in population from TNR. However, there are a few examples:

• "During an 11-year study of TNR at the University of Florida, the number of cats on campus declined by 66 percent with no new kittens being born after the first four years of operation."50


50 Why Trap-Neuter-Return Feral Cats?: The Case for TNR, Alley Cat Allies, based on Levy, Julie K., David W. Gale, and Leslie A. Gale. “Evaluation of the Effect of a Long-Term Trap-Neuter-Return and
• "A TNR program at the University of Texas A&M neutered 123 cats in its first year, and found no new litters of kittens the following year."51

• "A study of the impact of TNR on feral cat colonies in Rome, Italy, also observed colony size decrease between 16 percent and 32 percent over a 10-year period."52

TNR programs can also reduce residents' concerns about community cats. Research suggests that altered males are less likely to fight and vocalize, behaviors that may prompt residents to call animal control.

• "Cats in the TNR colonies were less aggressive on the whole and … the neutered males were rarely aggressive towards each other at all, resulting in less yowling, fighting, and potential for injury than males in the intact colonies."53

• In Orange County, Florida, "the number of calls to animal control about cats and the number of cats killed by animal control decreased in the six years after [the TNR program was] initiated, even while the human population grew significantly."54

Additional research concluded that neutering also reduced stress in male community cats.55

For those agencies that believe TNR type programs are abandonment, consider the following:

1. Do their Animal Control Officers patrol neighborhoods looking for all the outside cats to save from their abandoned fate? Wouldn’t that be their required legal duty under the cruelty or abandonment laws?

2. Why don’t agencies fund programs to go door to door to each house in a neighborhood to verify that every cat they see outside has a caretaker and is not abandoned and in need their intervention?

3. If it is so difficult for cats to survive outside without the shelter’s help (or a “verified caretaker”), then why are there so many cats still outside?


4. If life outside in our society is so harsh for these cats, then why aren’t most of the cats entering the shelter sick, injured, and/or emaciated?

5. Why aren’t there fundraisers and budget proposals to get more money to round up all the loose cats and euthanize them for their protection?

These questions are not meant to suggest that there are never any cats that suffer or struggle with living outside. These questions are included here to illustrate that the trials and tribulations of a small percentage of cats outside do not apply to all community/feral cats, (or even close to a majority) and should not form the basis of our management programs. The reason shelters don’t design programs like this is because they would be intensely unpopular and most outdoor community/feral cats are just fine where they are. The evidence of the independent success of feral cats is in every shelter. By our own prioritization of the programs we enact and fund, we demonstrate that we don’t need to provide sheltering and euthanasia services to almost any of them. An effective spay/neuter/vaccination program is the most important contribution to make for managing healthy stray community/feral cats.

Shelters can and should cease to admit healthy cats that will be euthanized or for which admission will result in the euthanasia of another cat regardless of whether they implement a TNR program. However, the success of these TNR efforts suggests that combining the two practices has the potential to do more to reduce intake and euthanasia and satisfy residents without increasing expenditures above current levels.

No data, research, or surveys were found that demonstrate that the public will individually harm a cat if a shelter refuses intake. Hundreds of shelters across the country schedule or manage the intake of dogs and cats. Even if a person did do such a thing, California has both misdemeanor and felony penalties for cruelty to animals. Shelters should avoid making blanket policies or practices based on what a statistically insignificant amount of people might do criminally. Some residents do get angry that a shelter would schedule or manage intake and refuse a healthy stray cat when the shelter is full. But that does not mean it is a good management practice (nor does the public generally support) to continue a policy that overfills a shelter to a point where the majority are euthanized as “excess due to space/time constraints” - just to appease a small fraction of the public who might get angry. Public agencies are not required to take in healthy stray cats at all in California (see above references). If an agency chooses to take in healthy stray cats, or voluntarily enters into contracts that require them to take in healthy stray cats, then it should do so responsibly and in a way that does not include euthanizing healthy individuals for space or time. Resources for healthy stray cats should be directed into large scale spay/neuter for those cats, not housing and euthanasia.

**Nature of Recommendation**

This recommendation pertains to both healthy stray cats and cats surrendered by their owners.

- Avoid taking in healthy cats that will surely be euthanized.
- Avoid taking in healthy cats when the shelter must euthanize another cat in the facility to make room.
**Recommendation**

*Best practice:* No healthy cat, regardless of temperament, should be admitted by an animal shelter if the admission of that cat would cause the death of that cat or another cat in the shelter.

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations that take in animals.

14. Problem(s) addressed
   a. Individuals attempting to help outdoor cats in their neighborhoods by feeding them may be inadvertently contributing to the cats becoming a perceived nuisance.
   b. When other people are unhappy with the activities of community cats, they may press for legislation and other solutions that are not in the cats' interest.

**Rationale for Recommendation**

Research estimates that there is one ownerless cat living outdoors nationwide for every 2.5 to 12.2 people. Using these assumptions, California's 2012 human population of over 38 million people, would imply between 3.1 million and 15.2 million "community cats." 56

Communities, such as San Jose and Chico, CA; Albuquerque, NM; and Jacksonville, FL, have shown that taking simple steps to manage cats can reduce their numbers and lead to a more harmonious co-existence between feral cats and their human neighbors.

For example, Jacksonville reduced the number of cats euthanized by more than 5,000 in the first year of spaying or neutering cats and returning them to from where they came. 57 Residents can borrow traps, then either bring the cats to the shelter or have animal control collect them for the procedure. Other shelters can advance this end by implementing similar programs. (See the resources appendix for a detailed implementation guide based on the experience in Jacksonville. 57)

Four research studies in different areas, including Santa Clara, CA, estimate that 8 to 12 percent of people feed unowned community cats. Another showed 26 percent, with people feeding an average of 2.6 to 3.7 cats each. 58 Agencies and other animal advocacy organizations can ask people who care enough to feed the cats to make reasonable efforts managing the food and other impacts to make the cats good neighbors.

These compassionate caregivers can also take the next step by ensuring the animals are spayed or neutered and have appropriate vaccinations. By doing so, they will help the animals they feed, support cat and human health, and contribute to humanely reducing the size of the cat group(s) or

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58 Multiple studies cited in DuCharme and Cicirelli (2011).
colonies over time. They will also be assisting the shelter by helping reduce the number of strays - and complaints about community cats - that agency personnel have to handle.

The stakeholders' group acknowledges the public discussion on community cats and their impact on wildlife. This paper does not address the topic; however, interested readers can consult the Results of the Outdoor Cat Conference, which shares findings from an event convened by the Humane Society of the United States and the Found Animals Foundation.59

**Recommendation**

**Best practice:** Individuals or organizations that feed any cats outside (regardless of temperament or ownership status) should make reasonable efforts to:

- Not allow food to remain in the environment for an extended period of time or to attract wildlife.
- Spay and neuter any cats being fed.
- Vaccinate any cats living outside against rabies and common communicable cat diseases.
- Seek methods to reduce the cats' overall impact on the environment and on native wildlife.
- Reduce the size of the colonies or groups over time.

This recommendation includes private humane organizations that feed cats. Private groups that do not feed cats directly but have contact with individuals who do should join public agencies in encouraging those individuals to act on all aspects of this recommendation.

15. **Problem(s) addressed**

   a. The current state law on the intake of healthy stray cats needs clarification because many people mistakenly believe that they are required to take in these animals - even though they are not legally required to do so.

**Rationale for Recommendation**

Recommendation 13 discussed the best practice of shelters not taking in a healthy cat when doing so would lead to the death of that cat or another one. Clarifying that there is no state obligation to take in healthy stray cats would remove a perceived barrier for shelters and encourage them to redirect their efforts and resources where they can achieve more benefit for animals, such as spay/neuter services, and help them to move away from lethal control of healthy stray cats.

**Recommendation**

**Legal requirement:** Amend state law to clarify that shelters have the right to refuse the intake of any healthy stray cat without liability.

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16. Problem(s) addressed
   a. Cats without identification have little to no chance of being reclaimed.
   b. Holding these cats can expose them to potential stress and sickness, slow or reduce their movement into homes, and use shelter resources that could be directed elsewhere.
   c. A large percentage of cats entering the shelter system are not owned.

Rationale for Recommendation
Owners reclaim only 2 percent of cats entering shelters. These numbers have not improved at all since the Hayden Law mandated longer holding periods to provide more time for owners to come for lost pets.

Some studies have shown that cats with microchips or ID have a reasonable chance of being reclaimed; however, cats without ID have almost no chance of being found. Freeing shelters to move cats without identification to any possible adoption or transfer for placement opportunity as quickly as possible at least improves their odds somewhat. Cats that would face euthanasia would still be held as specified under the current law.

Knowing that cats with identification would be held longer in a shelter before being adopted out or transferred might also motivate some owners to have their pets wear ID or implant microchips.

Recommendation
Legal requirement: Cats without identification may be immediately moved through the process toward a positive outcome (i.e. adoption, transfer, return to origin). Cats without ID could not be euthanized until the existing holding period expired (with current medical exceptions).

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations that take in animals.

17. Problem(s) addressed
   a. Many cat owners do not believe their cats should wear identification.
   b. When agencies or community members find cats without identification, they are very limited in their ability to help the cats return home.

Rationale for Recommendation
Although the previous recommendation called for cats without identification to move immediately to adoption or transfer, cats with identification should remain in the shelter for the holding period. Shelters should also use the identification to attempt to contact the owner.

In one national survey, 15 percent of owned cats and 14 percent of owned dogs had become lost in the prior five years, and many had been lost multiple times. 60 Fewer than 2 percent of cat owners who were reunited with lost cats reported, "I was contacted because of a tag my pet was wearing/my pet’s microchip."

About 15 percent of caregivers with lost dogs that made it home credited contact based on the identification. (People also found pets by looking in the neighborhood, by contacting animal control or when the animal simply returned home.) Knowing that shelters will hold a cat with identification longer may motivate more cat owners to have their pets wear identification and/or have their pet microchipped.

**Recommendation**

**Legal requirement:** Stray cats with any form of identification (name tag, rabies tag, microchip) must be held for owner redemption for the existing holding period prior to release for adoption, transfer to rescue partners, return to origin or euthanasia. Shelter must make efforts to contact owner/caregiver.

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations that take in animals.

18. Problem(s) addressed

a. The current law is unclear regarding whether agencies must hold owner-surrendered dogs and cats for two days to allow the owners to change their minds and reclaim their pets.

b. In practice, when people turn in their pets to the shelter, they do not come back for them later.

c. Holding these owner-surrendered animals for longer periods of time can expose them to potential sickness, slow or reduce their movement into homes, and use shelter resources that could be directed elsewhere.

**Rationale for Recommendation**

The Hayden Law specified holding periods to enable owners to reclaim missing animals. However, relinquished animals are not lost, and people rarely change their minds once they have turned over their pets. Shelters should be allowed to move aggressively to pursue any adoption or transfer opportunity that might find these animals homes and spare them from death.

Other recommendations on the owner-surrender process under *Best Practices – Intake*, also support this recommendation by helping owners understand the prospects for their surrendered animals, gathering information to facilitate successful placements, and identifying resources to avoid surrenders, if at all possible. Even in communities that do not implement all the owner-surrender recommendations, however, people who relinquish pets will almost never return for them.

**Recommendation**

**Legal requirement:** Owner-surrendered animals should be immediately available for adoption/transfer, and owners who surrender their pets to shelters are unconditionally releasing all rights to reclaim their animal.

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations that take in animals.
19. Problem(s) addressed
   a. Animal care agencies depend on revenue from sales of licenses as well as fees from impoundments and animal adoptions, fines for code violations, and local general funds.
   b. Agencies often have trouble collecting all the licensing revenue due to them, costing them potentially thousands or even millions of dollars per year.
   c. Intended to offset animal care costs, licensing fees represent only a small fraction of agency expenses. In a survey of 16 California cities and counties for 2011-2012, for example, (excluding Orange County) license fees collected as a percentage of expenses ranged from 5 percent to 24 percent, averaging 12 percent overall.

**Sample of Revenue Recovery in 2011-12**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>City/County</th>
<th>Expenditures</th>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th>Revenue Recovery</th>
<th>Licensing Revenue</th>
<th>% of Expenses</th>
<th>% of Revenues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carpinteria</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>$91,503</td>
<td>$22,000</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chula Vista</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>$2,137,212</td>
<td>$1,019,988</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>$1,82,608</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clovis</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>$617,000</td>
<td>$385,000</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>$385,000</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contra Costa</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>$10,498,511</td>
<td>$7,343,144</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>$1,825,058</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Dorado</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>$2,485,499</td>
<td>$1,254,565</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>$1,313,000</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresno (CCSPCA)*</td>
<td>City/County</td>
<td>$3,606,191</td>
<td>$8,113,073</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>$8,113,073</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kern</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>$5,509,812</td>
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<td>41%</td>
<td>$2,154,338</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>$19,519,848</td>
<td>$4,133,550</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>$4,133,550</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>County</td>
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<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maricopa</td>
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<td>30%</td>
<td>$506,000</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>$15,106,477</td>
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<td>$6,932,852</td>
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<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Clemente</td>
<td>City</td>
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<td>$1,116,853</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>$1,116,853</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego**</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>$14,558,711</td>
<td>$11,927,711</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>$2,058,500</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>City/County</td>
<td>$4,687,673</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Jose</td>
<td>City</td>
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<td>$8,089,729</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>$8,089,729</td>
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<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Luis Obispo</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>$2,407,262</td>
<td>$1,888,789</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>$1,888,789</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Approximately $3 million in revenue from contracted services paid by the City of Fresno and Fresno County.
** $9.6 million in revenue from contracted services fees paid by cities of San Diego, Carlsbad, Del Mar, Encinitas, Santee and Solana Beach.

**Rationale for Recommendation**

Licensing is a vital link between an animal owner and his or her community. The fees should cover the cost of restoring lost pets to their owners, protecting the public from rabies and dangerous animals, and managing stray, injured, and feral animals. By improving collection efforts, shelters can ensure that more owners contribute toward public animal care.

Especially in a time of diminished or denied funding from both state and local governments, increasing licensing revenue collection is crucial to improve shelters' ability to serve animals and
the public. Agencies around the state have instituted a variety of efforts that have been highly cost-effective. These efforts can pay off many times over for shelters. For example, Orange County added approximately three million dollars to its annual funding in just three years.

In Orange County, licensing fees rose from between 20 percent and 30 percent of expenses to 45 percent or more. A single 45-day intensive promotion period brought in over $800,000.61 According to the National Canine Research Council, “In Calgary, Alberta, Canada over 90 percent of the dogs and over 50 percent of the cats are licensed. As a result, Animal Services is funded entirely through pet licensing fees.”62 Please see the resources appendix for links to actions that Orange County, Calgary, and other communities have taken to achieve improvements in license fee collection.xii

If the cities and counties in the survey could achieve improvement similar to what Orange County achieved, relative to their current position, even 35 percent of expenses from licensing fees, they could add more than $21 million in funding per year across the 15 agencies. (See the resources appendix for a comparison of four licensing models.xiii)

Local governments can do so by performing a comprehensive review of their licensing programs and updating or creating policies to increase revenues. They can also evaluate some or all of the following approaches that have proven successful, in order to choose the solutions that are best for their communities:

Outreach – Raise Awareness

- Messages that make clear why dog and cat licensing is important for pets, owners, shelters, and communities.
- Public education, including canvassing programs (door-to-door contact) and approaching people waiting in line at pet events, such as mobile vaccine clinics.
- Partnerships with business. For example, in Los Angeles, some vet clinics distribute information or process licensing applications, in exchange for a small payment on each license. In Calgary, Canada, pet superstores process license applications for customers.63 The City of San Jose finalized a pilot agreement with Petco stores to do the same.

Customer Service – Make it Easy and Convenient

- Processing via mail, online, in new locations, or over the phone.

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Incentives – Make it More Financially Attractive

- Merchant coupon books with discounts or gifts for people who license.
- "Free first ride home" where animal services personnel who find lost or wandering pets return the animals to their homes directly, bypassing the shelter and at no cost to the owner.
- Limited-time amnesty programs that waive penalties for failure to license in the past, in order to motivate people to get licenses before the amnesty period ends.
- Reducing fees for the initial licensing period, such as for six months, to lower the cost for owners.

Enforcement – Follow-up with People Who Don't Comply

- Enforcing licensing laws assertively, by keeping good records and partnering with organizations such as tax collection offices and law enforcement.

Agencies can also explore new means of expanding licensing programs by working with utility companies, the Postal Service, code-enforcement officers, and other organizations with presence in the community. In addition to distributing information to pet owners, these partnerships can provide additional benefits, such as helping animal-licensing agencies identify underserved populations and areas where animals are creating problems. For example, if post offices shared lists of neighborhoods where mail carriers experience the most dog bites, animal control agencies could go in with assistance to pet owners on dog training, fencing, or other solutions. Local agency personnel would also likely find a substantial number of unlicensed animals in these locations.

Recommendation

Best practice: Agencies should improve licensing revenue collection for the purpose of achieving better outcomes for animals.

20. Problem(s) Addressed

a. Owners not purchasing licenses withhold revenue that is required for agencies to pay for services.
b. There is currently little monitoring of compliance.

Rationale for Recommendation

State law already requires that dogs be spayed or neutered when adopted from a shelter or rescue group. It mandates that dogs have a current rabies vaccination and that local officials responsible for dog or rabies control within a city or county make quarterly rabies control activities reports to the California Department of Public Health through the local health officer. More than 55 local jurisdictions currently require veterinarians to report owner and animal information to local authorities regarding any animals they have inoculated for rabies.

Given the importance of licensing to shelter finances and reuniting pets with owners, government agencies that handle this function (whether the local animal control organization or a different

64 California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 2606.4(a)(4)
part of the government, such as the treasurer's office), should make registration a similar priority. They can do so by requiring that veterinarians, rescue groups, pet stores, breeders, and other entities that have contact with a large number of companion animals be part of the solution. These individuals and organizations could sell licenses and/or report licensing information to the appropriate authority. Having these points of contact also report information for unlicensed animals would make it easier and less expensive for agencies to increase compliance with licensing laws.

**Nature of Recommendation**

Key points of contact should ensure that dogs that come through their facilities are licensed or report information on unlicensed animals to the local licensing authority.

**Recommendation**

*Best practice:* No dog should leave an animal shelter, rescue group, pet store, or breeder at the time of transfer of ownership without being either licensed or reported for licensing follow-up by the local agency. Likewise, when providing a rabies vaccination, veterinarians should report all vaccinated animals for follow-up.

This recommendation includes private as well as public organizations that take in animals.

21. Problem(s) addressed

a. Most current contracts between local governments and agencies calculate the funding for animal sheltering solely or primarily on intake volume or other measures such as minimum required holding periods.

b. Few contracts pay for or provide incentives for fulfilling the state’s policy preference of ending the euthanasia of adoptable and treatable animals. They rarely compensate for returning animals to owners, placing them in new homes, or transferring them to other humane groups for adoption. The thinking behind this approach is that shelters can charge fees to people who reclaim or adopt animals and that these fees should cover associated costs of care.

c. As a result, most agencies receive funding for the activity they have, or a minimum mandated requirement rather than for improving outcomes.

d. This mismatch of budget and mission is partly responsible for the lack of progress toward reducing intake, increasing adoption, and cutting the unacceptably high levels of euthanasia of healthy adoptable and treatable animals.

**Rationale for Recommendation**

California law requires cities and counties to provide certain animal control services to their communities, including the maintenance of a “pound system.” The individual cities or counties can perform the services, or local governments can enter into contracts with other local governments and non-profits to provide them.

The funding mechanisms in these contracts should support, rather than work against, the state policy preference to end the euthanasia of adoptable and treatable homeless animals. Although current arrangements based on intake compensate for the minimum required workload of
handling animals, it would be preferable to increase funding for agencies that show success in positive outcomes: returning animals to owners, placing them via adoption, transferring them to other groups that can find homes and/or returning them to the location of origin.

For example, the County of Los Angeles Department of Animal Care and Control contracts with the jurisdictions it serves for payment including amounts based on the number of animals multiplied by the number of days spent in the facility. The Inland Valley Humane Society & SPCA receives a fixed annual fee for services (in addition to retaining consumer fees). These funding structures may reflect costs but do not vary by performance or outcomes. The following table shows examples of other resource or workload-focused payment methods like these and compares them to examples of outcome-focused methods that would better serve California's animals and taxpayers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource/workload-focused</th>
<th>Outcome-focused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Kennel operation expenditures per animal kennel day. (San Luis Obispo County)</td>
<td>• Establish a feral cat Trap Neuter Release (TNR) program to help decrease the number of kittens/cats who enter the shelter. (City of Berkeley)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Number of responses to calls for services (Yolo County)</td>
<td>• Increase the amount of animals adopted, returned to owner, and rescued. (County of Sacramento)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Average daily population at the shelter (Yolo County)</td>
<td>• Live animal outcome rate (County of San Luis Obispo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Total number of dogs vaccinated at public clinics (Yolo County)</td>
<td>• Reduction of intake (City of San Jose)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Actual number of animals boarded at the shelter (City Of 29 Palms)</td>
<td>• Treat all animals who can reasonably be rehabilitated (Marin County)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kennel services - dog and cat per day/Field services - per hour (Los Angeles County)</td>
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</table>

Although the recommendation in this section focuses on setting contract compensation based on outcomes, it is important to stress that local governments and non-profit organizations are not required to provide contract services to other government agencies for animal control. Agencies that provide animal control services to local governments through contracts are doing so voluntarily and for compensation. They must negotiate terms that they believe enable the sustainable delivery of those services – and that maximize the opportunities to accomplish their mission.

Animal control agencies providing contract services to local governments must also go beyond financial considerations to evaluate how the contract will affect housing at the shelter that will care for the additional animals. Agencies that have multiple animal control contracts that overcrowd the capacity of the shelter should not take on additional contracts and should review existing contracts.
Shelters that do not or cannot provide good welfare or outcomes for animals entering the shelter from their home community should not add or continue contracts that overburden the existing system. If the local government that is paying for contract services is not willing to invest in increased capacity and high rates of positive outcomes for the animals, then the animal control agency providing those services should discontinue those contracts. Usually, the animal control agency providing the services is the one that is criticized for the overcrowding and the high euthanasia rates. The good news for those agencies is that this can be changed.

Government agencies that provide contract services can’t charge for more than the service they are providing. This may seem like a barrier to some agencies that want to charge more for contracts, but they key question is, “what service is the animal control agency providing?” The level of service provided is entirely under the control of the agency providing the services, not the jurisdiction paying for the services. All too frequently, animal control contracts only charge for the daily expenses associated with the minimum mandatory holding period and euthanasia. Sometimes this is done in order to keep the contract, so that the revenue can continue support the operating budget and staff. Sometimes this is done because the contracting agency believes that the local jurisdiction won’t pay more for services. These contracts usually allow the shelter to keep the adoption fees as an offset if they hold animals beyond the minimum holding period. Unfortunately, in high volume and/or high euthanasia shelters, the total number of adoptions are far surpassed by the total number of animals euthanized, turning this model into a significant resource drain. However, there is nothing in the law that limits an animal shelter from charging to hold animals for a longer period of time. For example, if the average length of stay until adoption is 12 days, then the animal shelter should charge for 12 days of care, not just the current minimum holding period of 72 hours. Shelters that provide contract services should not feel obligated to contract with other jurisdictions that don’t want to pay for the programs offered. Shelters should not lower their standards or increase/continue euthanasia just to keep a contract.

Some agencies worry that if the shelter raises the price too high, then the local jurisdiction won’t pay and/or animals may suffer as a result. We ask, why do those concerns justify continuing to overcrowd and underfund the shelter, ultimately euthanizing most of the animals housed? Why is this the responsibility of the sheltering organization? Forcing this issue/conversation with jurisdictions wanting contracts will either increase the resources needed to improve outcomes for animals entering the system, or it will require the local jurisdiction to find another sheltering solution. Either way, the local jurisdiction wanting shelter services will be the one responsible for answering the public about how they will care for the animals in their community – and that’s how it should be. The shelter offering contract services will either gain more resources for better outcomes, or have fewer animals crowding the system – both of which are better outcomes. Animal shelter leaders do seem to realize that, in some regions, they have an advantage due to the fact that they have the only animal shelter around. This should not translate to assuming the responsibilities of another jurisdiction. Shelter programs should be designed to maximize outcomes for the animals and charge the actual cost of doing so, whatever that may be. These programs can and should include everything from subsidized spay/neuter services and appropriate veterinary care to increased or enhanced shelter housing.
Nature of Recommendation

- Move away from contracts based solely or primarily on intake, minimum holding periods, or workload.
- Move towards contracts that reward shelters for achieving successful resolution of problems through field contacts, return to owners, adoptions, law enforcement, and transfers for placement.

Recommendation

**Best practice:** Agency budgets and contracts should relate – to the extent possible – to maximizing positive outcomes, rather than on workload (e.g., intake).

22. Problem(s) addressed

a. As previously discussed, the changing status of the Hayden Law illustrates the challenges of unanticipated and unsustainable financial mandates.

b. The original creators of the Hayden Law never intended the state to support the provisions financially.

c. Because of the funding mandate and budget pressures, legislators have suspended the law seven since its 2001 effective date.

d. Funding from the mandate for shelters has been unreliable, creating ambiguity for shelter and community financial planning.  
   
   - The amounts of money at stake are considerable. In 2008-2009, the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) expected local governments to be paid $23 million for the mandated food, medical care, and space necessitated by the Hayden Law's longer holding periods.
   
   - Most claims have gone unpaid or resulted in only partial payment. Audits of claims from 17 agencies saw only 42 percent allowed after audit, a reduction of $41 million across multiple years.
   
   - In some years, no reimbursement occurs.
   
   - The state does not reimburse agencies in a timely manner.

e. The mandate has also led to calls for repeal of the reimbursable elements of the law.

f. The ongoing deliberations take resources from government and sheltering, while distracting attention from assessing the law's impact.

Rationale for Recommendation

The problem of unfunded mandates is not unique to the Hayden Law. Regulations across a variety of social issues have created unfunded mandates in California. These other laws have also faced annual scrutiny, frequent suspension, calls for repeal, and resource-draining efforts to determine whether the regulations and funding will continue.

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To avoid similar circumstances on animal protection legislation in the future, advocates for new laws should ensure that no unfunded mandate would ensue, or they should identify a stable source of funding to cover any potential mandate. In so doing, they will design laws that are more likely to endure, succeed, and provide the desired benefits to animals. They will also help animals by avoiding mandates that create unpredictable funding for shelters and seemingly endless campaigns to maintain or alter the law or the funding.

**Nature of Recommendation**
- Avoid laws that prompt mandates.
- Determine funding source for laws that are likely to trigger mandates.

**Recommendation**

*Best practice:* New laws relating to standards at animal shelters should not create unfunded mandates. If the new laws may create mandates, advocates should expressly identify funding sources.

**Other**

23. Problem(s) addressed
   a. Agencies fail to report data on animals entering facilities and their disposition or report on an inconsistent basis.
   b. Failure to disclose these numbers or to provide them in a standardized manner limits the ability of the public, and government to understand the status of homeless animals in California, their needs, and progress to help them.

**Rationale for Recommendation**

In order to improve the situation for pets entering California's public sheltering system, it is crucial to know how many come in each year and what happens to them. Publicly disclosing results is also part of building public trust.

Despite requirements in the California Code of Regulations section 2606.4 (link to full text in the resources appendixxiv) that agencies produce this information annually, many fail to do so. Some agencies publicly report their results, but only for those animals they deem healthy and adoptable. Although the definitions of healthy and adoptable are useful in analyzing which animals can realistically find homes, excluding other animals significantly undercounts the number of dogs and cats entering shelters and being euthanized.

**Nature of Recommendation**

Agencies should publicly post, at least annually, on all live animals entering the shelter and their outcomes including adoption, transfer, reclaimed by owner, return to origin or euthanized, regardless of health or adoptability status.

For an example of the proposed reporting, readers can visit a sample report for a humane society in Virginia, where the State Veterinarian's Office (under the Department of Agriculture and
Consumer Services) requires annual statistics about the intake and disposition of animals. The Office puts all the data online and makes the results searchable by agency or in aggregate.

**Recommendation**

**Best practice:** Each agency needs to be transparent about its intakes and outcomes, which includes the following:

- Posting all intake and outcome data at least annually via website and/or other means easily accessible to the public.
- Sharing data on all live animals entering the shelter and their outcomes regardless of health status or adoptability.
- Filing timely activity reports to the California Department of Health, in compliance with the California Code of Regulations section 2606.4.

This recommendation also applies to private humane organizations that take in animals.

**Conclusion**

One of the primary goals of the stakeholders’ group was to identify ways to insulate important animal protection laws – primarily, the “Hayden Law” – from vulnerability associated with California’s economic climate and the ups and downs of the state budget. The legislative changes proposed in this white paper – if enacted – would not only further the state’s policy goal of reducing the number of healthy and treatable animals that are euthanized, but would also significantly reduce the state’s reimbursement obligations to cities and counties under the Hayden Law (aka the “Animal Adoption Mandate”).

By authorizing cities and counties to release certain dogs and cats to positive outcomes (e.g., adoption, transfer to rescue groups) in less time than the current holding period requires, the state’s obligation to reimburse the costs associated with holding and caring for those animals will be reduced.

And by clarifying that government shelters are not – and never have been – obligated by the state to take in healthy stray cats, the state would no longer be obligated to reimburse local governments for the costs associated with the sheltering and disposition of such cats if cities and counties continue to admit them. Since such cats make up such a large percentage of the current intake and euthanasia in government shelters, this is not a trivial implication.

Significantly reduced mandated reimbursements can create opportunities for the animal protection field, local communities, and state policymakers to work together to identify ways to promote the state’s policy preference and incentivize local governments to achieve it. The stakeholders’ group strongly urges the State of California to financially support the policy preference of the state to save more adoptable and treatable animals.

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Through the collective efforts of hundreds of agencies, non-profit organizations and tens of thousands of caring citizen volunteers, California has made significant strides in efforts to help homeless pets in the last 15 years. Low cost spay-neuter services, public education adoption campaigns, and a growing number of rescue groups have raised awareness and worked to reduce the problem of pet overpopulation. Together, people who care about animals have achieved important gains for dogs, cutting the number euthanized annually nearly in half from 1998 to 2010.

With reporting agencies euthanizing nearly 400,000 dogs and cats in 2010 alone, however, California is a long way from achieving the state’s policy preference of finding a home for every healthy and adoptable animal. Millions of animals - in shelters now and yet to come through the doors - must count on agency leaders, rescue groups, animal advocates, government officials, and concerned citizens to press forward to adopt practices and requirements that can dramatically increase the number saved.

Unlike some appeals for compassionate action, the recommendations in this white paper are pragmatic. Most are budget-minded and operations-tested to benefit not only animals but also shelters and California taxpayers. In communities where we found success and improvement, we often found that it was the leadership at the executive level that made the most difference, not the elected officials. The stakeholders' group has worked for more than two years using extensive data, thoughtful analysis, and broad input to define these recommendations. This white paper now becomes the foundation for the process to move forward, and as partners, work with communities and agencies across the state to determine the best mix of solutions and paths to achieving the state’s ambitious goal.
Appendix A
Ideas Explored but not Recommended

The stakeholders' group considered many ideas in choosing the 23 recommendations to help California's public sheltering agencies and animals. Team members analyzed and discussed the options, evaluating each approach against the following criteria:

- Does this change improve the potential for positive outcomes?
- Will making the change result in a meaningful impact?
- Is the impact significant enough to make implementation worth the effort?

The ideas that did not make the final list of recommendations wouldn't produce a big enough effect, didn't offer sufficient impact to justify the implementation costs, and/or went beyond what the stakeholders' group could reasonably handle.

Examples include:

**Increasing Penalties for Failure to Spay or Neuter**
While finding people to adopt homeless dogs and cats is crucial, reducing the supply of incoming animals is the only way to end the pet overpopulation problem. The stakeholder group discussed the pros and cons of changing state laws to increase fines and penalties for not altering pets. However, compelling evidence exists to show demand for affordable sterilization services is high, particularly in underserved areas. Failure to spay or neuter is more correlated with limited access to affordable and proximate services than it is with resistance to sterilizing pets. Efforts to increase resources and outreach in communities where spay/neuter rates are low should be the focus. See resources appendix for a list of California Codes related to spay and neuter.

**Clarifying the Holding Period for Dogs (F&A Code 30501)**
The Hayden Law requires government agencies and those private agencies which contract with local government to take in stray animals to hold them for 4 to 6 business days. When the law is suspended, the minimum holding period is 72 hours. Research by the stakeholders' group did not produce persuasive evidence for an optimal holding period (e.g., a general holding period that would give all animals ample time to find positive outcomes – recognizing that holding an individual animal longer may reduce capacity to assure positive outcomes for other animals). In addition, some members of the stakeholders' group were uncomfortable recommending any reduction in the holding period before a shelter can euthanize animals. As a result, this paper does not include a specific recommendation for a uniform holding period.

Instead, the stakeholders’ group identified specific situations to reduce holding times before animals can be moved for positive outcomes. For example, shelters should have the option to make dogs without identification and litters of puppies immediately available for adoption or transfer to rescue groups (although agencies would not be required to do this). See the resources appendix for full text of F&A Code 30501.

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67 See, for example, comprehensive research about spay/neuter attitudes, messaging and outreach conducted by The Humane Society of the United States and Maddie’s Fund: http://www.animalsheltering.org/how-we-help/work-for-change/spay-neuter-campaign-materials/messaging-spayneuter.pdf.
Prioritizing Cat Intake Based on Type (e.g. owner surrender, stray, feral, with ID)
The stakeholders’ group discussed that if shelters are going to take cats, other than those they are legally required to accept, there should be a recommended priority. For example, would it be beneficial for shelters to first accept strays with identification, then owner-surrenders, than other strays or feral animals? However, the members concluded that different shelters would have reasons for taking different types of cats based on individual situations at the shelter. Therefore, it did not make sense to establish a recommended priority list. Instead, the recommendations focus on careful evaluation of optional intake and avoiding admittance of healthy cats in amounts that exceed the shelters' capacity to save them.

Increasing Licensing through Ties to Other Processes
Given the potential for better licensing enforcement to yield revenues due to agencies, the team explored linking licensing to driver's license renewal, vehicle registration, homeowner insurance, and rental agreements. However, none of these avenues appeared as targeted to reach pet owners as the final recommendation to work with veterinarians, rescue groups, pet stores, breeders, and other entities that have contact with a large number of companion animals.

The team also thought about providing more detailed rewards and incentives programs related to licensing. However, the ideas included in the recommendation on Improving Licensing Revenue Collection should be sufficient for each community to define the program that best meets its needs.

Strengthening Pet Identification Requirements
Despite the Hayden Law's increased holding periods, there has been little improvement in the percent of incoming animals returned to owners. The group examined the possibilities for stricter identification requirements. For example, members looked at making microchipping mandatory. However, given the low level of compliance with existing licensing laws, the team felt that agencies should address that issue first before a legal requirement for microchipping or another identification system would make sense.

Building Revenue with Check-offs and License Plates
Many states offer a tax check-off and/or an animal-friendly license plate to raise money for spaying and neuter. Of 10 states with an animal-related tax contribution option, most do not raise more than $100,000 annually. In 2012, after a hiatus, California's tax check-off to support spaying and neutering was reinstated and raised over $200,000 with minimal marketing. Other states' check-offs for animals have raised up to $500,000 per year. The most successful of the license plates nationally raise up to $250,000 per year. The most successful non-animal plates in California raise between $1 million and $4 million dollars annually.

However, as attractive as these amounts seem, they are much less than the millions of dollars available annually from better licensing compliance. They also fall far short of what agencies need to truly affect the homeless animal population. Budgets of cities that euthanize very few animals indicate that they spend $10 or more per capita to achieve those results. At that rate,
California would need $100 million to $200 million to end the euthanasia of adoptable and treatable dogs and cats.

As a result, the time and money to more aggressively promote California's plate and tax check-off would not yield a sufficient return on investment to rank ahead of recommendations that made the final list. See the resources appendix for a summary of tax check-off and license plate findings.xvii

Administrative Citations
Jurisdictions including Orange County, San Bernardino, and Southeast Area Animal Control Authority (Downey, Norwalk and Pico Rivera) have had success with administrative citation processes to enforce the collection of license fees and fines for non-compliance. These processes can include a series of notices and penalties and must provide owners the opportunity to appeal the citations. The details of how such a process would work in each community would vary so greatly based on local laws and circumstances that the stakeholders' group could not create an appropriate general recommendation. See the resources appendix for a summary of the administrative citation process followed in San Bernardino County.xviii
APPENDIX B
Microchipping

One of the most useful approaches to increase the number of animals returned to homes is injecting a microchip in the animal. When an animal has the tiny implant that carries a unique code, agencies recovering the animal can scan the chip and get contact information for the owner, as long as that information is current. The procedure is common, widely available, and inexpensive.

According to an Ohio State University press release, research with 53 shelters in 23 states between August 2007 and March 2008 showed that the return-to-owner rate for cats was 20 times higher and for dogs 2.5 times higher for microchipped pets than were the rates of return for all stray cats and dogs that had entered the shelters. 68

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68 Research Communications, Microchips Result in High Rate of Return to Owner of Shelter Animals to Owners, http://researchnews.osu.edu/archive/shelterchip.htm.
APPENDIX C
Other Perspectives

In the instances where the stakeholders’ group was not unanimous in supporting a recommendation, comments from any member with concerns appear below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Other Perspectives</th>
<th>Section</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Practice:</strong> Require an appointment to surrender healthy animals unless and evaluation determines need or risk to the animal or community.</td>
<td>One member of the stakeholders’ group felt this recommendation should only apply for organizations that were already at capacity to take in or adopt out animals at the time of the surrender.</td>
<td>Intake Reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Best Practice:</strong> As a requirement to schedule a surrender appointment or to surrender a pet where no appointment system is in place, owners participate in a short assessment (by phone, online, or in person) to gather information about the pet and identify what issues are driving the desire to surrender. Based on this assessment, agencies give owners an honest appraisal of the likely outcome for their pet if it enters the shelter (adoption vs. euthanasia). Where possible, agencies should refer pet owners to resources and support that would help them address the pet owner’s concerns or issues and keep the pet in the home.</td>
<td>One person expressed concern regarding whether a significant proportion of shelters could implement the recommendation to conduct an assessment.</td>
<td>Intake Reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legal Requirement:</strong> Litters of puppies (defined as three or more from the same location under the age of four months) that are surrendered or stray may be immediately available for adoption or transfer.</td>
<td>One member of the stakeholders’ group felt that a defined holding period should remain to ensure any owner had the chance to reclaim puppies.</td>
<td>Standards and Practices</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Legal requirement:</strong> Dogs without identification may be immediately moved through the process toward a positive outcome (i.e. adoption, transfer); dogs with identification shall be held under the current</td>
<td>Several members of the stakeholders’ group expressed reservations about eliminating the holding period for dogs without identification. They felt that in some instances owners would attempt to reclaim these animals. Some group members suggested an alternative,</td>
<td>Standards and Practices</td>
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</table>
holding period and then made available for any other outcome. shorter holding period and/or being allowed to spay/neuter an animal or take other action while waiting. Communities could weigh these concerns about eliminating the holding period and compare that risk with the capacity of their shelter to house dogs humanely and the impact of holding more than 80 percent of the dogs for an owner that is not going to materialize.

**Legal requirement:** Stray cats with no identification should be made immediately available for spay/neuter, adoption, or transfer to rescue. No euthanasia should occur until after the existing holding period. One member of the stakeholders’ group expressed reservations about eliminating the holding period for cats without identification, wanting to maintain a defined holding period for the possibility that an owner would reclaim a cat.

**Legal requirement:** Stray cats with any form of identification (name tag, rabies tag, microchip) must be held for owner redemption for the existing holding period prior to release for adoption, transfer to rescue, or euthanasia. Shelter must make effort to contact owner/caregiver. One stakeholders’ group member would have preferred more specifics on what shelters should do to contact owners. The concern was that some send a letter and wait, but could do more. Another team member wanted the recommendation to include the exact number of days or hours in the current holding period.

**Best practice:** No dog should leave an animal shelter, rescue group, pet store, or breeder at the time of transfer of ownership without being either licensed or reported for licensing follow-up by the local agency. Likewise, when providing a rabies vaccination, veterinarians should report unlicensed animals for follow-up. Several stakeholders’ group members expressed reservations about the mandatory reporting. Two felt that veterinarians would resist reporting. Required reporting might also discourage some owners from taking their animals to the vet. Another worried that if shelters reported, some people would be wary and not visit to adopt.

**Best practice:** Agency budgets and contracts should relate – to the extent possible – to maximizing positive outcomes, rather than on workload (e.g., intake). One team member raised concerns that this recommendation could result in under-funding agencies in communities where environmental factors beyond shelter control made it likely that more euthanasia and fewer positive outcomes would occur.

Budget
## APPENDIX D
### Resources

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<td>California SB 1785 (Hayden Law)</td>
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<td>Conducting a Basic Intake Exam: Expert tips from The HSUS Shelter Services team</td>
<td><a href="http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/magazine/mar_apr_2011/101_basic_intake_exam.pdf">http://www.animalsheltering.org/resources/magazine/mar_apr_2011/101_basic_intake_exam.pdf</a></td>
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ix San Jose Animal Care and Services Rescue Agreement

San Jose Animal Care and Services Rescue Registration

x California Shelter Survey on Return to Owner Rates – Cats

California Shelter Survey on Return to Owner Rates – Dogs

xi Save Lives with Feral Freedom: A Guide to the Feral Freedom Program

xii How Licensing Works in a Responsible Pet Ownership Community

OC Animal Care – License Incentive Programs

xiii Comparison of Licensing Models

xiv California Code of Regulations section 2606.4

xv California Spay/Neuter Statutes

xvi F&A code 30501

xvii Existing Public Funding Mechanisms

xviii San Bernardino County Administrative Citation Overview