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November 23, 2010

Roger Dickinson
Chair, Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
700 H Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Animal Care & Regulation Agency – Update on Regional Efforts

Dear Mr. Dickinson,

For the past five months I have participated actively as part of the of Animal Care Collaborative Working Group tasked with identifying the potential for regional collaboration in the delivery of animal care services in Sacramento. The group has met every three weeks to discuss a variety of ideas, and while all parties express a genuine desire for closer collaboration, the fundamental resource issues that brought us all to the table continues to prevent meaningful progress.

Many citizens and organizations were concerned that cutting the Animal Care & Regulation budget any further would not only seriously hamper this year's outcomes, but would also harm efforts to regionalize services (see, e.g., attached letter from June 16, 2010). In fact, doing so sent the message to other area agencies that the County was interested in doing *less* when it was already operating at funding/staffing levels below that required to even meet minimum professional animal care standards. To wit, Sacramento County is now staffing its 15,000 animal/year agency at *less than a third* of the recommended minimum levels.

From our discussions, it seems clear that no city or non-profit agency in the Sacramento area is interested in reducing care and services for animals – in fact, most are actively seeking ways to *increase* resources and outcomes, consistent with their constituents' values.

Despite our diligent efforts, we have been unable to overcome the disparity that exists between what prospective partners want and what the County is willing to provide. The front page article in Sunday's *Sacramento Bee* makes all too clear that the

investment taxpayers made in the new animal care facility is not sufficient for meeting our community's animal care needs. The efforts made by the agency's staff and volunteers this year are commendable, but unsustainable. And when the County squanders regional opportunities like that posed by recent negotiations with the City of Rancho Cordova, concerns are validated that the County lacks the commitment to future partnership.

While I hope the dialogue continues and am happy to continue discussing the regional options as a parallel conversation, it is my opinion that any regional delivery model is infeasible for the 2011-12 budget year. As such, I am urging you to direct County staff to start preparing now for "Plan B" which necessarily entails a vision for funding and delivering animal care services for County residents. Putting off such efforts and discussions under the belief that a miracle regional plan will materialize in the next few months is neither logical nor helpful as we approach the upcoming budget workshops.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Fearing". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Fearing
California Senior State Director

cc: Supervisors MacGlashan, Nottoli, Peters and Yee
Incoming Supervisor Serna
Carl Simpson, Animal Care & Regulation
Members of the Animal Care Collaborative Working Group



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June 16, 2010

Roger Dickinson
Chair, Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
700 H Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Opposition to Budget Cuts at Animal Care & Regulation

Dear Supervisor Dickinson,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Board on Monday. It's clear there is passion and commitment to animal protection amongst Sacramento County residents and we're hopeful you'll find it prudent to avoid the staffing cuts proposed by the county executive.

I just wanted to highlight the most salient points raised during Monday's hearing:

- Cutting kennel staff further will create serious welfare problems and disease risks.
- Reducing animal control staff will mean serious public safety threats like dangerous dogs and roaming animals will not be addressed to the public's satisfaction.
- **Reducing your commitment to animal care will undermine the County's efforts to pursue regional collaboration.**
- The agency has already taken a disproportionate share of budget cuts.
- The amount of the funding gap needed to stave off cuts to the agency is less than \$400,000 – or 0.08% of the General Fund.
- Allocated costs comprise nearly a quarter of the agency budget. Add that to the building debt expense and approximately half of the agency's budget is unavailable to cover program expenses.

We respectfully ask that you make no further cuts to Animal Care & Regulation.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Fearing
California Senior State Director

cc: Supervisors MacGlashan, Nottoli, Peters and Yee
Paul Hahn, Municipal Services Agency
Carl Simpson, Animal Care & Regulation