

County of Monterey



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April 10, 2023

The Honorable Bill Essayli
California State Assembly
1020 O Street, Room 4520
Sacramento, Ca 95814

Re: AB 595 (Essayli) Animal Shelters: 72-hour notice: euthanasia: study. – OPPOSE
As amended on March 21, 2023

Dear Assembly Member Essayli:

The County of Monterey regrets to inform you of our opposition to your Assembly Bill 595. This measure will state that it is a criminal violation to euthanize an adoptable animal without providing public notice 72 hours before euthanasia and requires a euthanasia date. Overcrowded shelters simply can't meet the mandate without making significant changes to their current operations.

AB 595 isn't just about "planning ahead" or being more transparent; it's about a one-size-fits-all mandate that will have negative consequences in many circumstances and communities. Unfortunately, a public shelter and contracted nonprofit shelter needs to pivot quickly when intake outpaces space. To meet these new requirements, shelters will need to redefine what it means to be "full." Currently, shelters can operate at capacity and only make space in urgent situations. Under AB 595, shelters will have to reduce occupancy to create open space for incoming animals at all times. This could lead to reduced length of stays and fewer options for positive outcomes.

It is important to note that most shelters in California utilize every tool in their tool chest to increase live outcomes and reduce unnecessary animal intake. If available, shelters utilize social media, support groups, and their own website to publicize available animals. Across the state, shelters are holding animals far beyond the state mandated 72-hour hold period. California animal shelters are keeping animals in their care on average 20 days or more before they are reclaimed by their owner, adopted, transferred to another group, or euthanized. For most shelters, their rescue partners transfer animals out of the shelter before space concerns occur. This healthy partnership keeps space open for incoming animals.

As amended, the costs associated with complying with AB 595 have gone up and remain a significant unfunded mandate. The additional hold period and posting requirements place a mandated requirement on government shelters without a source to cover the expense. In 2001, the Commission on State Mandates ruled that additional hold times and posting requirements on government shelters need to be reimbursed by the state. In addition, AB 595 assumes that all animal shelters maintain a website. For small, rural shelters this isn't necessarily true. The bill should be evaluated to determine the fiscal impact to the state of California.

The proposed state study to evaluate California's sheltering system is needed and could significantly increase understanding and support for animal shelters across the state, especially government and contracted shelters. AB 595 should be amended to only include the statewide study.

For these reasons, the County of Monterey opposes AB 595. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the County's Public Policy Advisor, Ashley Walker of Nossaman LLP at 916-442-8888.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Luis A. Alejo".

Luis A. Alejo, Chair
Board of Supervisors

Cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Business & Professions Committee
Robert Sumner, Chief Consultant, Assembly Business & Professions Committee
Bill Lewis, Assembly Republican Consultant
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