



## THE CAT FANCIERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

World's Largest Registry of Pedigreed Cats

**Joan Miller**

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The Honorable Mark Leno  
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2114  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attention: Chuck Nicol, Committee Consultant

FAX 916-319-2181

**Re: AB 1634 the "California Healthy Pets Act" as amended April 30 and as revised May 3  
OPPOSE**

Dear Chairman Leno and Committee Members:

**The Cat Fanciers' Association opposes AB 1634, as amended 4/30 (and revised 5/3). We request inclusion in the listed opposition for the Bill Analysis in your committee.**

CFA, founded in 1906, is the largest and most respected registry of pedigreed cats in the world, with member clubs throughout the United States, Canada and elsewhere. CFA is a resource for information related to pet population dynamics and public attitudes regarding cats. This bill will not reduce the numbers of homeless cats in shelters or those on the streets in California communities. We urge your rejection of this ill conceived legislation that we believe will be costly to the State.

**AB 1634 prohibits a person to own or possess any cat or dog over 4 months of age that has not been sterilized.** Recent amendments have not changed our fundamental objections.

1. Owners should choose whether or when to have veterinary surgical procedures, including sterilization, performed on their animals with advice from their own veterinarian.
2. Jurisdictions should not be forced by the State to set up mandated permit procedures or a breeders' license law that is not needed or desired in a particular community.
3. Breeders of pedigreed cats cannot meet the conditions for exemption or obtain an "intact permit" for several reasons. Therefore, many fine breeding cats will be lost for future generations and cats of breeds known to be highly desired would have to be imported into the state, possibly from less desirable sources.

**AB 1634 will be costly for jurisdictions.** There are 536 local jurisdictions in California that will ALL need to review their local ordinances and create procedures to comply with AB 1634. No city or county is in compliance with the exact provisions in this bill today although some have permits, licenses and higher fees for intact animals. Every jurisdiction will need to spend some money before any expected revenue comes in. Jurisdictions will want reimbursement from the State for these expenses.

1. Creating new ordinances means legal fees and staff time.
2. Many jurisdictions have town hall meetings to present new animal ordinances for public input. Public hearings will be necessary for dramatic and controversial ordinance changes. Multiply the bitter battle over this bill by 536 jurisdictions.
3. Raising funds to establish sufficient low cost spay/neuter services for citizens who will have to comply or face civil penalties as soon as an ordinance is passed.
4. Executing a study to determine what fees would be considered “reasonably necessary to fund the administration of that jurisdiction’s intact permit program” and public hearings to set fees.
5. Creating some enforcement mechanism, public outreach plan and forms.
6. Establishing a local breeder license program necessary for some businesses and breeding colonies that would not be able to comply with AB 1634 without this availability. Examples might be the University of California breeding colonies or USDA commercial licensed breeders with cats/dogs.

A conservative average estimate of \$20,000 for these start-up expenses multiplied by 536 jurisdictions means a potential cost of \$10,720,000 for local governments before any fees come in.

**AB 1634 will be costly for animal control and shelters.** There is no reliable shelter reporting in California. We question claims that mandated spay/neuter will reduce shelter and euthanasia costs. The current cost to house and euthanize dogs and cats is not \$250 million per year as asserted by the sponsors.

1. Data presented by sponsors is based on the California Department of Health Services Rabies Control reporting, which is incomplete. Even though reporting is required by CA Code many counties and cities have not consistently provided activity reports over the last 10 years. The information has been incorrectly extrapolated and exaggerated by sponsors of AB 1634.
2. Costs for handling and euthanasia of cats and dogs vary greatly among animal control agencies and shelters throughout the state. To determine costs per-animal other than pure speculation is impossible. Considering a per-animal cost of \$308 (City of Los Angeles), which includes overall shelter operation figures or a \$103 average per animal (County of Santa Clara Animal Control) for housing and surgery will result in a per year cost that is drastically different (approximately \$86 million vs. \$250 million).
3. There would not be a savings for shelters in California even if fewer animals were to be handled, which is already happening in many parts of the state without mandatory spay/neuter laws. Fewer animals does not necessarily translate into lowered costs – it should mean animals can be kept longer and made more adoptable. Many shelter costs will remain stable such as educational programs and cruelty investigations. As shelter operations improve budgets should be used for humane changes, such as increasing shelter hours so more animals can be reclaimed or adopted, holding animals longer, instituting behavior modification programs, treating diseases, increasing off site adoptions, foster programs, disaster planning, public safety measures and other life saving programs. This is what we, as a society, expect animal services will provide in our communities.

**AB 1634 permit fees won’t cover enforcement costs.** Permit fees are limited to administrative costs for the permit program. Civil penalties collected are limited to administration, outreach and enforcement.

1. Even if, as the sponsors of AB 1634 state, enforcement is to be “complaint driven” rather than expensive door-to-door canvassing or aggressive hunting down of breeders or the owners of intact cats/dogs, substantial expense beyond the \$500 penalty per violation will be necessary. If a violator sterilizes their pet or provides a veterinarian’s letter the penalty is waived all or in part. Many will do this depleting revenue.
2. The estimated cost of responding to neighbor complaints is approximately \$200 average since multiple calls or visits usually are necessary. It is impossible to visually determine if a female cat is spayed so additional paperwork, proof or visits may be needed. Harassment and citizen unrest is inevitable with costly hearings.
3. Licensing compliance for dogs is already low in California and almost non-existent for cats. The Department of Health Services data shows a decrease in licensing for dogs. Licensing rates are shown to decrease with either high intact animal fees or breeder licensing schemes.

4. As more animals are sterilized fewer intact permits would be issued further lowering the revenue to animal control. The City of Los Angeles only licenses 13% of unaltered dogs out of the total number licensed.

Sadly, in order to comply with this mandate, other programs that have proven to greatly reduce the numbers of homeless animals in this State may be curtailed.

**AB 1634 means potential loss of cat club activity.** AB 1634 would result in the loss of the cat fancy in California as a nucleus for raising the value of all cats. Cat breeders/exhibitors cannot comply with this bill and would leave the state or discontinue their breeding programs.

1. In 2006 California hosted 32 Cat Fanciers' Association cat shows including the large and prestigious CFA International Cat Show held in San Mateo. Revenue generated from participants in these shows meant sales tax for the State, hotel use and occupancy taxes, public facility rentals, property taxes on facility rentals, airport boarding fees and taxes and a general benefit to the state economy as a whole.

2. Intangible benefits from cat clubs help the economy of the State and contribute to the welfare of cats. These activities include donated money to shelters, breed rescue programs, donations to the University of California School of Veterinary Medicine health studies, sponsorship of cat adoptathons, cat assisted therapy visits to nursing homes, donated goods to local foster groups, educational programs, donations for local feral cat trap/neuter/return programs and educational programs for the public concerning the nature of cats and breeds with information prior to obtaining a cat.

In California, as in most of the United States, owned cats are sterilized at a very high rate – eleven studies show 86% to 92% of owned cats are already spayed/neutered. AB 1634 is not necessary. It is the free-roaming, unowned population of cats and their unweaned kittens that contribute the highest numbers of cats euthanized in California shelters. AB 1634 will not affect this situation. In fact this bill will only increase the number of unowned cats ignored by those who fear penalties thus adding to the cats taken into our shelters and the expense to jurisdictions.

We urge you to not allow AB 1634 to go forward.

Sincerely yours,

Joan Miller  
CFA Legislative Coordinator

Cc: Committee members; Authors

Pamela DelaBar, CFA President  
Allene Tartaglia, CFA Executive Director

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