



THE CAT FANCIERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

World's Largest Registry of Pedigreed Cats

George J. Eigenhauser, Jr. Director-at-Large, Legislative Coordinator

P. O. Box 6089 • Marysville • California 95901

530-742-6153 (Work) • 530-329-8658 (Home) • geigenhauser@allmail.net

July 7, 2009

Assembly Committee on Appropriations
ATTN: Julie Salley-Gray
State Capitol Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Fax: (916) 319-2181

Re: SB 250 (as amended) **OPPOSITION**
An act to add Section 30804.6 to the Food and
Agricultural Code, relating to animals.

Dear Ms. Salley-Gray;

I am writing on behalf of The Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc.¹ to oppose SB 250 as amended on 5/28/09 [as well as to **oppose** the amendments being circulated.] The bill is set for hearing on July 15, 2009 before the Assembly Committee on Appropriations. While much of SB 250 applies to dogs, the provisions regarding cats are unworkable, costly and may have many unintended consequences. Local governments would incur unnecessary costs implementing the provisions of this bill and we are urging a no vote by the committee.

We are opposed to this bill because it would increase the costs of local animal control services; result in more abandonment of pets and cause unnecessary killing at local animal shelters. The California Department of Finance analysis of this measure also found that it would increase costs and lead to more animals being abandoned². They note that: "Mandatory spay and neuter provisions have failed throughout California at the local government level." SB 250 would require that each of California's 58 counties and 478 cities create ordinances and programs to implement this unfunded mandate, diverting

¹ *The Cat Fanciers' Association, Inc. (CFA) is a non-profit organization founded in 1906. Part of CFA's mission is to enhance the well-being of all cats. CFA participants, who breed and show pedigreed cats, are active in cat health promotion, cat breed rescue, shelter support and other animal related programs throughout the world. CFA is a positive force that has helped to educate the public about proper cat care, spay/neuter and responsible pet ownership. CFA is proud of its self-regulation programs to encourage high standards of care for cats in multi-cat breeding environments. A voluntary "Cattery of Excellence" program and breeder mentoring program are part of ongoing efforts to ensure responsible breeding and good cattery environments.*

² *A copy of the California Department of Finance bill analysis for SB 250 is enclosed.*

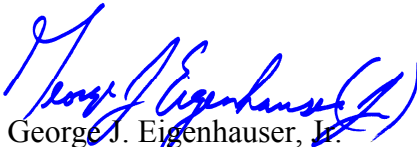
limited resources from already overburdened animal control departments. This bill would also be a fundamental shift in animal control policy from the local level to the state. Rural communities would be forced to implement a program that has already been tried, and failed, in more urban settings. The needs of farmers with "barn cats" and inner city residents feeding stray cats in the alleys are not the same.

SB 250 would classify anyone who feeds or cares for a stray cat for more than 30 days as its "custodian." Owners or "custodians" of outdoor cats would be required to have the cats spayed or neutered. But many outdoor cats are strays, feral cats or otherwise unowned or loosely owned. Studies show that 87-92% of owned cats are already spayed or neutered; unowned cats are altered at a rate of less than 5%. These cats have no owners to fine or punish, so the bill will have no positive effect on the problem. But the bill would have a deterrent effect on concerned citizens trying to help deal with the problem.

The term "custodian" in SB 250 would diminish the legal rights of owners and the legal status of our pets. The important factor in reducing the reproduction of unowned/free-roaming cats is the point when a person declares "I own this cat" because this leads to their taking responsibility. How many times has animal control heard people say: "I don't own this cat, I'm not responsible"? People understand that property rights of ownership protect our abilities to possess, transfer, provide care and plan reproduction as long as it is humane. Use of the term "custodian" lacks the responsibility inherent in ownership and its use diminishes the value of cats in our society. The California Department of Finance bill analysis notes that: "...the term "custodian" may reduce the legal status and value of dogs and cats and restrict the rights of owners, veterinarians, and government agencies to protect and care for animals."

CFA encourages individuals to spay/neuter and provide lifelong care for homeless cats found in neighborhoods, commercial areas and back yards. Criminalizing acts of kindness are not the way to solve the problems with free roaming cats. SB 250 will only add to the numbers of cats killed at local shelters. California deserves better than a "one size fits all" solution that has already proven to be a costly failure. We urge a no vote on SB 250.

Very truly yours,


George J. Eigenhauser, Jr.
CFA Legislative Coordinator

Enclosure as stated

cc: Pamela DelaBar, CFA President
Allene Tartaglia, CFA Executive Director