

Committee on Legal Issues Pertaining to Animals  
New York City Bar Association  
42 West 44th Street  
New York, NY 10036

March 5, 2007

Hon. Elliot Spitzer, Governor  
Executive Chamber  
Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Spitzer:

The NYC Bar Association Committee on Legal Issues Pertaining to Animals (the Committee) is writing to express how deeply troubled the Committee is by certain recently proposed budget cuts in two critical animal welfare laws, the Animal Population Program and the Pet Dealer Licensing Law, to pay the fringe benefits and salaries of state employees.

Specifically, the Committee would like to express its opposition to the proposed \$150,000 in cuts in New York's Low Cost Spay/ Neuter Program, which offers low-income New Yorkers an opportunity they would not otherwise have to help control the population of unwanted animals. The \$3 surcharge imposed on unaltered dog licenses is one of the main sources of funding for New York State's spay/neuter program. The Committee finds this diversion of funds to pay the salaries of animal industry inspectors troublesome because the only way to reduce the killing of cats and dogs in animal shelters across New York State is to reduce the number of cats and dogs being born. This program was recently expanded to low income pet owners and is already operating without adequate funding. While the Committee does not deny the value of adequately funding animal-industry inspection, allocating monies from as vital a program as low cost spaying and neutering effectively increases costs to the state's unwanted animal sheltering system.

In addition, the Committee opposes the proposed diversion of \$100,000 in license fees collected from pet dealers – money which the state currently uses to regulate that same industry. This budget cut will make it much more difficult to respond to animal cruelty and consumer complaints against pet stores and dog breeders. Cutting funds to such an important and already scarcely resourced program which protects the health of animals sold by dealers as well as protecting New York consumers seems very ill advised.

The Committee on Legal Issues Pertaining to Animals of the New York City Bar Association sincerely thanks you for your attention to our concerns. We would in fact urge you to increase the budgets for these two programs. We are certain that you will take these matters to heart and act in the best interest of *all* New Yorkers, both human and non-human.

Sincerely,

cc: Hon. Sheldon Silver  
Hon. Joseph Bruno