



## HOUSE BILL 113

### Animal Welfare Program and Trust Fund

*Providing resources to help enhance animal welfare and protect New Mexico communities*

Sponsors: Rep. Lujan, Rep. Szczepanski, Rep. Sanchez, Rep. Borrego, and Sen. Cervantes

Co-Sponsors: Rep. Abeyta and Rep. Gonzales

#### WHAT WOULD THIS LEGISLATION DO?

House Bill 113 will establish an Animal Welfare Trust Fund (Fund) with an initial corpus of \$10 million. The Trust Fund would be an investment fund from which earnings would be distributed annually to an Animal Welfare Program Fund for projects benefitting domesticated cats and dogs. County and municipal agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations, would be eligible to apply for funds to support a variety of needs to address the care and well-being of cats and dogs. The Department of Finance & Administration (DFA) would disburse the funds as grants and contracts. DFA would develop rules to facilitate the application for and distribution of annual grant fund dollars beginning in July 2028.

#### WHY IS THE ANIMAL WELFARE TRUST FUND NEEDED?

New Mexicans rely on animal shelters and rescues, humane law enforcement, and animal welfare programs to support community public health and safety, and they also care deeply about the humane treatment of animals: **according to a 2024 scientific poll, 2 out of 3 supported establishing an Animal Welfare Trust Fund.** Yet many communities lack the resources to provide the level of care people want and expect for cats and dogs. According to the New Mexico Companion Animal Network, a coalition of 15+ shelter leaders and partner advocates:

- **Most of NM's 40+ animal shelters are operating chronically at overcapacity.**
- **Many NM shelters operate with inadequate infrastructure.** Even recently built urban shelters have outgrown their capacity: there are needs for exercise, enrichment, and behavior modification to facilitate higher adoption rates. Animals deteriorate behaviorally as they stay longer in shelter environments.
- **Rural shelters in some areas lack the resources to fully comply with the state's humane minimum shelter standards.** Bringing struggling shelters into compliance with basic public-supported standards of care will enhance animal welfare and decrease taxpayer spending on animal care and control.
- **Most New Mexico families have pets, yet several counties and tribal communities lack adequate or ANY animal care and control infrastructure.** This contributes to inhumane outcomes for dogs and cats, and increases disease transmission, animal bite cases, and livestock depredation.

#### 2023 Statewide Animal Shelter Numbers\*

	Intake	Transport	Euthanasia	Euthanasia Rate (% of Intake)	Human Population	Euthanasia per 1,000 people
Totals Reported	95,139	35,902	17,964	19%	2,114,000	8.49
Estimated not Reported	14,987	N/A	5,844	N/A	N/A	N/A
Estimated Grand Totals	110,126	35,902	23,808	22%	2,114,000	11.26

\*36 of 44 shelters reporting

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO NEW MEXICO'S COMMUNITIES

New Mexico animal welfare professionals (animal shelter workers and front-line animal control officers) help keep our communities safe and ensure animals are treated humanely. Also, because companion animals are so important in the lives of New Mexicans, the well-being of animals is inextricably linked to the well-being of people.

- In communities where shelters are overcrowded and cannot take in homeless animals, those animals are more likely to be abandoned, roam, go unvaccinated, and reproduce. The public health and safety risks flowing downstream from this lack of infrastructure include rabies transmission from unvaccinated animals, bites from stray dogs, and increased vehicular collisions with loose animals.
- Animal welfare professionals are often called on to address animal hoarding, which is a health risk to the animals as well as the people occupying the homes where hoarding is taking place (often involving children).
- Many shelters provide low-income pet owners with animal food, low-cost veterinary care, doghouses, fencing, and other services. This helps keep people and their animals together, leading to positive outcomes for both.
- Some shelters are providing emergency shelter and even veterinary care for animals when families experience crisis (house fires, hospitalization, incarceration, domestic violence, and other life disruptions).
- Animal shelters are increasingly called upon to help families impacted by tragic wildfires and other natural disasters, providing safe havens for animals while families put their lives back together.
- Investments in animal care, control, and protection saves communities money: funds invested in spay/neuter lead to savings in animal care and control by preventing unwanted dog/cat births and the associated costs of sheltering unwanted animals.
- Increasing programs like microchipping animals can meaningfully reduce shelter intake and costs and help return lost animals to their families more quickly.

## WHAT PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING?

Needs will vary by specific community or area of the state, but would include:

- Animal shelter repairs, renovations, operational costs, expansions, intake and euthanasia reduction;
- Equipment, supplies or services for animal control, cruelty law enforcement and seizures, spay/neuter services, humane community education and outreach, and resources for indigent persons.

## NEW MEXICANS SUPPORT AN ANIMAL WELFARE TRUST FUND

New Mexico Association of Counties  
New Mexico Sheriffs' Association  
Bernalillo County Sheriff John Allen  
Rio Arriba County Sheriff Merrifield  
Chief of Grants Police Department Maxine Monte  
Fourth Judicial District Attorney Thomas Clayton  
Eighth Judicial District Attorney Marcus J. Montoya  
Bernalillo County Commissioner Eric Olivas  
Town of Edgewood  
Santa Rosa City Council  
Albuquerque City Councilor Tammy Fiebelkorn

City of Santa Rosa Animal Control  
Espanola Humane Society  
Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley  
Friends of Estancia Valley Animals  
Los Suenos Veterinary Group  
Animal Humane New Mexico  
Dixon Animal Protection Society  
Jemez Valley Amigos