



Minnesota Humane Society

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September 24, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of Minnesota Humane Society (MHS) to express support for House File 208 and Senate File 73, establishing a Minnesota Companion Animal Board to provide expertise in and oversight of companion animal issues in Minnesota.

Founded in 1869, Minnesota Humane Society is the oldest humane society in the state and is a statewide education, advocacy and rescue organization dedicated to protecting the lives and interests of Minnesota's animals. Among our many services, MHS provides grants to low income Minnesotans whose companion animals would not otherwise receive medical treatment for injuries or illnesses and provides annual subsidies for over 400 community cat sterilizations throughout Minnesota. A significant number of those receiving injury/illness grants are the elderly, disabled or veterans. In many cases these individuals are home-bound and their animals are the only companionship they have. Our community cat subsidies have allowed thousands of cats to be trapped, neutered and released to be cared for by their caretaker, addressing one of the greatest animal welfare needs in Minnesota, as well as the nation: population control of community cats.

We see the growing needs of companion animals and their families throughout Minnesota. The Companion Animal Board would allow the State of Minnesota to more effectively plan for and respond to the welfare of companion animals and support the efforts of those who care for these animals. The Companion Animal Board can work collaboratively with public, private and nonprofit sectors to lead statewide discussions to define community needs, such as statewide affordable spay-neuter services, access to affordable veterinary care, animal shelter management, local assistance, and more.

The importance of companion animals in the lives of Minnesotans is significant and growing. Current research shows that more than 70% of Minnesota households include a pet. As the industry and importance of companion animals in peoples' lives grows, so do the issues and problems involving these animals. A Companion Animal Board with specific expertise in companion animal issues is necessary in Minnesota.

Minnesota Humane Society encourages you to support House File 208 and Senate File 73.

Thank you,
Linda Challeen
Executive Director, Minnesota Humane Society
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Cc: Representative Kaohly Her, District 64A
Senator Erin Murphy, District 64