



California Animal Welfare Association

Promoting Excellence in Animal Care, Sheltering, and Law Enforcement since 1909

February 13, 2026

Dear City Leaders,

On behalf of the California Animal Welfare Association (CalAnimals), the state association representing and supporting more than 300 shelters, animal control agencies, private humane societies, and other animal welfare organizations, we are writing to encourage cities and municipalities to carefully evaluate the standards, oversight, and accountability measures in place for animal services providers that you contract with to meet your legal responsibilities in providing animal sheltering, rabies control and other legal mandates.

Recent events in our state have underscored the critical importance of ensuring that contracted animal services providers operate in full compliance with California law and uphold the required standards of humane care for animals in their custody. When deficiencies occur—particularly those involving inadequate veterinary treatment, inhumane housing, or failure to meet basic standards of care—the impact is felt not only by the animals, but also by the communities that entrust public agencies with their welfare. As you are aware, the public is very interested in animal welfare and the treatment of animals in shelters.

As cities consider entering into or renewing animal services agreements, we respectfully encourage you to:

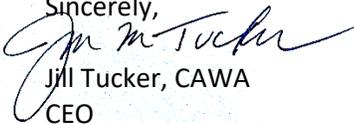
- Ensure that contractors demonstrate full compliance with all applicable state and local animal welfare laws.
- Require and review regular reporting of animal intakes and outcomes, field services (where applicable) and other appropriate metrics related to the contracted services.
- Establish meaningful oversight mechanisms, including regular inspections and transparent reporting.
- Provide accessible channels for public feedback.
- Evaluate contractor performance based on quality of care and outcomes, along with efficiency and cost.

Animal services contracts represent both a public trust and a moral responsibility. While fiscal stewardship is essential, cost considerations should not compromise humane treatment, necessary and appropriate veterinary care, record keeping and other lawful operations. Transparent expectations, consistent monitoring, and accountability safeguards protect animals, strengthen community confidence, and reduce risk to municipalities.

CalAnimals remains committed to supporting the success of animal welfare and sheltering organizations in meeting the needs of animals and people in their communities; including sustainability, legal compliance, and compassion. We are happy to provide information and resources as needed.

Thank you for your leadership and for your commitment to ensuring the humane treatment of animals in your communities.

Sincerely,



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CEO

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