



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

March 14, 2019

The Honorable Dee Margo, Mayor of El Paso
Members of the El Paso City Council

Via e-mail: mayor@elpasotexas.gov; district1@elpasotexas.gov;
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Dear Mayor Margo and City Councilors,

We hope you're well. We've been contacted by El Paso–area residents who were distressed by a recent [news report](#) about allegations that at least four dogs died during extremely low temperatures after they had been moved to outdoor kennels and a barn, which were built by the city's Animal Services shelter in an attempt to "save more lives." Records reportedly showed that one dog had been so sick that he or she had been scheduled for euthanasia but the facility's director had "held off to see if the medicine the dog was on would take its course." She reportedly said that because of the facility's "goal of becoming no-kill, [it's] providing care longer than ever before." We share callers' concerns and ask that the allegations be thoroughly investigated and, if needed, policies be strengthened to ensure the humane and legal care of animals in the city's custody.

As you likely know, Texas state law ([Title 25, Chapter 169, Rule §169.26. Facilities for the Quarantining or Impounding of Animals](#)) requires animal shelters to provide impounded animals with adequate heating and cooling, among many other things to protect their health and safety.

The prolonged and agonizing unassisted deaths of animals entrusted to the care of animal shelters is a disturbing trend caused by pressure placed on the facilities, from both the public and government officials, to [increase "live release rates"](#) before controlling the population of animals born in the community. Adequately regulating animal ownership (including through the rigorous enforcement of humane confinement, sterilization, and other basic animal care and control ordinances) is also needed to reduce the number of animals who are surrendered or abandoned in the first place.

El Paso isn't alone in its struggle to address costly and time-consuming problems resulting from animal overpopulation and homelessness—a crisis created by residents who fail to care responsibly for their animal companions when they neglect to have them spayed or neutered and by the lack of affordable veterinary services in many communities. Yours is not the only community being pressured (or even bullied) by fanatical "no-kill" campaigners who are opposed to animal euthanasia *under any circumstances*. Yielding to this pressure is resulting in a growing number of shelters that place a higher value on their "[save rates](#)" than on the health and safety of individual animals they have been entrusted to care for

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and protect or the welfare and safety of taxpayers who fund the facilities. Having a low euthanasia rate but a sky-high rate of animals turned away or dying unassisted in cages and kennels from illness, injuries, or exposure is not success. It's a grave failure.

Communities can safely and humanely move toward a "no-kill" ideal only by first becoming *no-birth*. The city has established spay/neuter legislation that requires breeding permits; outlaws the unregulated breeding and sale of animals by breeders, pet shops, and flea markets; and specifies animal care standards. Stepping up enforcement of these progressive ordinances may be needed to achieve the desired results. An ordinance prohibiting the unattended [chaining and tethering](#) of dogs can also help prevent neglect of animals and aggression as well as reducing costly problems for the community. If PETA can be of any help, please let me know.

Meanwhile, we hope you will intervene to ensure that commonsense animal-protection and public-safety policies are followed at the city's animal shelter.

Thank you for all your hard work for El Paso residents.

Respectfully,



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