



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

June 1, 2021

The Honorable Pete Rust, Mayor of Green River
Green River City Council Members

Via e-mail: prust@cityofgreenriver.org;
killpack@cityofgreenriver.org; rberg@cityofgreenriver.org;
jzimmerman@cityofgreenriver.org; mshutran@cityofgreenriver.org;
gjost@cityofgreenriver.org; sbushman@cityofgreenriver.org

Dear Mayor Rust and Council Members:

Our office is hearing from citizens who are rightfully upset over [reports](#) that city officials haven't approved the purchase of needed equipment to ensure that sick, suffering, and/or unadoptable animals in your custody are provided with a humane, painless end, especially when you've been offered a \$5,000 donation to do so. **We respectfully request your immediate action to end the use of gas poisoning at the city's animal shelter.**

The city appears to be grossly misinformed about the American Veterinary Medical Association's (AVMA) position on carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. The AVMA's "[Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals: 2020 Edition](#)" (Guidelines) state that CO poisoning "is not recommended for routine euthanasia of cats and dogs. ... The preferred method of euthanasia in [animal shelter] facilities is injection of a barbiturate or barbituric acid derivative with appropriate animal handling."¹

When properly performed by caring, well-trained people, euthanasia by injection provides animals with the most painless, peaceful death possible and affords shelter workers peace of mind. The Guidelines also advise, "For animals accustomed to human contact, gentle restraint ..., careful handling, and talking during euthanasia often have a calming effect **and may also be effective coping strategies for personnel**" [*emphasis added*].² In addition, they state, "To minimize the stress and demands of this duty, trained personnel **must be assured that they are performing euthanasia in the most humane manner possible**. This requires an organizational commitment to provide ongoing professional training on the latest methods and materials available for euthanasia" [*emphasis added*].³

¹AVMA, "Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals: 2020 Edition," accessed June 1, 2021, <https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/2020-Euthanasia-Final-1-17-20.pdf>.

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

Washington, D.C.
1536 16th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202-483-PETA

Los Angeles
2154 W. Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90026
323-644-PETA

Norfolk
501 Front St.
Norfolk, VA 23510
757-622-PETA

Berkeley
2855 Telegraph Ave.
Ste. 301
Berkeley, CA 94705
510-763-PETA

Info@peta.org
PETA.org

Affiliates:

- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Australia
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (U.K.)

By contrast, death by CO poisoning can be slow and terrifying. During the process, which can take up to 30 minutes, panicked animals often gasp for breath, try to claw their way out of the gas chamber, and—when more than one is forced into the box—attack each other. Some animals must be gassed repeatedly before they die, while others have [lived through the poisoning process](#), been [found alive in freezers](#), and been discovered at [landfills](#) after being presumed dead.

According to a recent news report, animals who most commonly require euthanasia at the city’s shelter are sick, injured, unsocialized, and aggressive. The *Guidelines* warn that gas poisoning is particularly dangerous for “sick or depressed animals where ventilation is decreased” and notes that “agitation during induction is more likely because the rise in alveolar gas concentration is delayed. A similar delayed rise in alveolar gas concentration can be observed in excited animals having increased cardiac output. **Suitable premedication or noninhaled methods of euthanasia should be considered for such animals**” [*emphasis added*].⁴

The Association of Shelter Veterinarians’ “[Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters](#)”—followed by shelters nationwide—concur with the AVMA: “The use of carbon monoxide as a method of euthanizing dogs and cats in shelters is unacceptable due to multiple humane, operational, and safety concerns. . . . [A]n acceptable method of euthanasia must be quick and painless, and should not cause distress.”⁵ Furthermore, “Any gas that is inhaled must reach a certain concentration in the lungs before it can be effective The high gas flow rates necessary to achieve the recommended concentration of 6% can result in noise levels that frighten animals. Placing multiple animals in a chamber may frighten and distress the animals and dilute the effective concentration of carbon monoxide that each animal receives, **creating a haphazard euthanasia experience that can be prolonged, painful and ineffective**” [*emphasis added*].”⁶

The question is not whether to euthanize animals but how they are treated and handled, including the method used to end the lives of those for whom there are no other suitable options. To that end, we are offering the additional \$1,000 reportedly needed for training or equipment to ensure that animals in the city’s custody who must be euthanized are afforded a peaceful end. I can be contacted at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] and am eager to help. May we please hear from you soon?

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Brown
Animal Sheltering Adviser
Cruelty Investigations Department

cc: Tom Jarvie, Chief of Police (tjarvie@cityofgreenriver.org)

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵The Association of Shelter Veterinarians, “Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters,” accessed June 1, 2021, <https://www.sheltervet.org/assets/docs/shelter-standards-oct2011-wforward.pdf>.

⁶*Ibid.*