



Support Legislation to Fund Spay/Neuter to Save Money and Save Lives

Each year, animal shelters in West Virginia take in over 50,000 cats and dogs, and each year, about 40% of these animals, including perfectly healthy and adoptable pets, are euthanized. Meanwhile, West Virginia taxpayers spend nearly \$10 million annually to impound, care for, and euthanize unwanted dogs and cats. In 2013, the state legislature created the West Virginia Spay/Neuter Assistance Program to subsidize the cost of spay/neuter surgeries for pets of low-income residents in order to address this tragic and costly issue, but the Spay/Neuter Assistance Fund lacks a reliable and robust funding source.



Spay/Neuter saves lives. Thirty-four states have established funding programs to support spay/neuter services in the state, and the most comprehensive programs have substantially reduced the homeless pet population, thereby reducing the rate of euthanasia and the cost on taxpayers. States like New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Maine have implemented aggressive programs and seen dramatic results. After implementing their programs, New Jersey witnessed a 61% decrease in pet homelessness, and New Hampshire had over a 75% decrease in euthanasia rates.

Spay/Neuter saves money. County and city animal control agencies spend millions of dollars each year housing, caring for, and working hard to find placements for animals. West Virginians want to see their taxpayer dollars used on programs that work. Investing in spay/neuter services will reduce the amount of money spent on the needless and tragic deaths of more than 23,000 pets, resulting in significant savings down the road. For example, for every \$1 invested in spay/neuter programs in New Hampshire, the state saved \$3.15 in reduced impoundment costs.

Spay/Neuter promotes public health and safety. Increased access to spay/neuter will reduce human-animal conflicts, including dog bites. Unsterilized dogs are more likely to bite and more likely to roam. Additionally, a statewide spay/neuter program will have the added benefit of helping reduce the spread of rabies by reducing strays and roaming pets that are more likely to contract and spread rabies.

What the bill does:

- Provides a robust and reliable source of funding for the West Virginia Spay Neuter Assistance Program.
- Generates funds by creating a \$100 surcharge on an already-existing pet food registration fee.
- Costs consumers less than 75 cents per pet per year while saving significant taxpayer money.

