



May 14, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor
State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni G Atkins
President pro Tempore
California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair
Senate Budget Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anna Caballero, Chair
Senate Budget Subcommittee #4
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Wendy Carrillo, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee #4
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for FY 2021-22 Funding for Pet Assistance and Support Program (Housing and Community Development Department) - as proposed by Senator Hertzberg

Dear Governor Newsom and Honorable Legislators,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, companies, and local governments, we write in strong support of ongoing and one-time funding totaling \$10 million or more to support the Pet

Assistance and Support (PAS) Program at the Housing and Community Development Department.

The PAS program, which was created through one-time funding of \$5 million in 2019, is aimed at reducing barriers for pet owners experiencing homelessness. PAS is a grant program providing homeless shelters with funding for shelter, food, and basic veterinary services for pets of those experiencing homelessness.

Homeless individuals often rely on pets for emotional support, companionship, and affection. And yet, pet ownership remains a major obstacle to accessing shelter and services among unhoused homeless adults and families. Many unsheltered individuals refuse housing and services if doing so requires them to abandon their animal companion. This happens all too often: a majority of shelters, motels, and other assisted housing programs do not permit animals, pushing potential beneficiaries to remain on the street, in their cars or RVs, or in tent camps.

The prior funding stretched only far enough to support 28 of the 49 shelters that applied -- with applicants seeking nearly double the amount of funding allocated to the program. By continuing the PAS program, the State of California can ensure access to essential medical and living assistance services to many people who may otherwise not receive it.

We urge you to include at least \$10 million in a combination of one-time and ongoing funds in the FY 2021-22 state budget to ensure that this critical part of the state's safety net can extend to more communities, more shelters, more people, and more pets.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Alison Tudor
Executive Director
Alliance for Community Transformations
Mariposa, CA

Susan Lea Riggs
Sr. Director of State Legislation
ASPCA
Sacramento, CA

Jonathan Russell
Director of Housing Strategy
Bay Area Community Services
Oakland, CA

Amelia Funghi
Manager
Berkeley Animal Care Services
Berkeley, CA

Elizabeth Oreck
National Manager, Housing Initiatives
Best Friends Animal Society
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County of Monterey
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President
Friends of Front Street Shelter
Sacramento, CA

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Sacramento, CA

Derek Dolfie
Legislative Representative
League of California Cities
Sacramento, CA

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U.S States Public Policy Director
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Cynthia Carter
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