



## **ANIMAL SHELTERING BOARD**

*Moving the Animal Sheltering Board to the Environment Department*

House Bill 147 (HB 147) –

Sponsors: Rep. James E. Smith and Sen. Daniel A. Ivey-Soto

HB 147 will authorize the administrative move of the Animal Sheltering Board from the Regulation and Licensing Department to the Environment Department. The Environment Department has the capacity to facilitate the continued development of the Animal Sheltering Board's mission. The move will ensure that the Animal Sheltering Board can continue to assist municipalities, counties and residents across the state by providing education and enforcement of humane euthanasia, offering strong leadership in humane animal sheltering, and implementing proven solutions to the costly problem of dog and cat overpopulation.

### **BACKGROUND of the Animal Sheltering Board**

Each year, New Mexico's animal shelters take in over 135,000 homeless, lost and abandoned dogs and cats; of these, over 65,000 are euthanized annually. In 2007, the New Mexico Legislature and Governor enacted the Animal Sheltering Act (§77-1B-1 through 12), which created the Animal Sheltering Board within New Mexico's Regulation and Licensing Department.

The Animal Sheltering Board's mission is to ensure a humane death for every shelter animal requiring euthanasia; to define standards for animal shelter operations and facilities; and to develop spay/neuter initiatives to address the costly problem of dog and cat overpopulation in New Mexico. The Animal Sheltering Board, still quite young, continues to meet the challenges inherent in its highly specialized mission and to operate successfully within a very modest budget.

Animal Sheltering Board members include one euthanasia agency employee, one animal shelter director, one veterinarian, one representative of a non-profit animal advocacy organization, one member of an animal rescue organization, one member of the public, one member of the New Mexico Association of Counties and one member of the New Mexico Municipal League. Current board members reside in the following counties: Bernalillo, Valencia, Santa Fe, Tarrant, Doña Ana, Taos and Otero.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS of the Animal Sheltering Board**

By early 2009, the Animal Sheltering Board completed the development and adoption of mandatory rules governing euthanasia protocols, technicians, agencies, instructors, and formulary (16.24.1 - 16.24.6, NMAC). As of 2015, the Animal Sheltering Board has issued a total of 281 licenses: 239 euthanasia technicians, 28 euthanasia agencies and 14 euthanasia instructors. The Animal Sheltering Board is also responsible for monitoring and disciplinary activities associated with its licensees, including investigating complaints and conducting hearings.

In response to 2011's Senate Memorial 36, the Animal Sheltering Board produced a study of development and funding options for a spay/neuter initiative to aid low-income households in New Mexico.

In 2012, the Animal Sheltering Board produced and published online its Recommended Minimum Standards for Animal Shelters in New Mexico. The board disseminated this document to animal shelters statewide in early 2013.

In 2014, the Animal Sheltering Board oversaw the distribution of approximately \$30,000 from the state's spay/neuter license plate, made available to 44 local spay/neuter programs in 28 counties. The New Mexico Legislature and Governor appropriated an additional \$70,000 to be distributed to spay/neuter programs at the board's discretion. To achieve the greatest impact, the board developed a targeted plan to fund 16 low-cost programs within the nine communities whose public shelters have the highest intake and highest euthanasia rates in New Mexico: Portales, Clovis, Roswell, Farmington, Hobbs, Valencia County, Gallup, Carlsbad, and Doña Ana County. This successful effort is on target to provide affordable spay-neuter surgeries for the dogs and cats of approximately 1,400 income-qualified households. The Animal Sheltering Board's strict funding guidelines and direct distribution to existing local programs ensures that all funds are expended only on sterilization surgeries, in cooperation with local veterinarians.