

"Compassion, in which all ethics must take root, can only attain its full breadth and depth if it embraces all living creatures and does not limit itself to mankind." Albert Schweitzer

**SHELTER ANIMAL ADVOCACY FUND, LOS ANGELES**  
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August 24, 2010

President Eric Garcetti  
and all Councilmembers  
Los Angeles City Council  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles CA 90012

Honorable Councilmembers:

RE: CF No. 10-0982 INCREASING ANIMAL LIMITS IN RESIDENTIAL LIMITS

The Shelter Animal Advocacy Fund, Los Angeles hereby submits their support in favor of the increase of the animal limit per residential property in the City of Los Angeles to 5 dogs and 5 cats. We commend Councilman Rosendahl for presenting this motion to the council.

Allowing citizens to legally adopt 5 dogs and 5 cats will increase the possible number of adoptions from the city shelters and also allow more people to consider fostering animals. As a person who sometimes fosters a dog, I would personally feel much more inclined to do it if I was legally allowed to take an extra dog when asked. Even if a person is not cited for breaking the animal limit law, the threat still exists if someone decides to "complain."

Despite what the vocal minority believe, most citizens do NOT break the law nor want to leave themselves and their pet in a vulnerable position. In the majority of cases, people are responsible with their animals and they care deeply about their well-being.

Regardless of the animal limit law, reckless and irresponsible people will continue to break these laws. I don't believe for a minute that allowing people to have two extra dogs or two cats per residential property will have a negative impact on neighborhoods, children or owners of condos and other housing that has its own animal limits enforced by HOAs or apartment owners.

In fact, many of the negative criticisms regarding an increased animal limit focus on those citizens who currently don't follow the legal animal limits. Primarily it focuses on those engaged in illegal activities such as dog fighting and backyard dog breeding and who will continue to break the law no matter if the limits are 3 or 5 dogs. Thus far, having limits have not stopped those who intend to disregard it anyway.

As for animal hoarders, these are mentally ill people who often think they are performing animal rescue work, but ultimately do not adopt out any of the animals. Hoarders also acquire animals in total disregard of any limits that the law imposes. People with this affliction will collect animals well beyond a "average" number. As has been seen, many of these people end up moving out of the city to continue their collecting on a larger scale and to go unnoticed. Without proper psychiatric help, the recidivism rate for animal hoarding is over 90%. Thus, it is correct to say that animal limit laws play no part in the behavior of animal hoarders.

Furthermore, in the protest that was presented to the city by Phyllis Daugherty she repeatedly refers to “aggressive breeds” and “those who can least afford to have more animals” which I interpret as meaning, Pit Bulls and low-income people. As usual, her remarks imply a racist and breedist mentality that is completely mischaracterizes the thousands of responsible lower-income citizens who have and care for their pets responsibly and the thousands of well-behaved, good-natured Pit Bulls that reside in homes throughout Los Angeles without incident. I believe both of these groups are being unfairly targeted and blamed for all the problems of homeless animals, dog bites and criminal behavior that are lumped together in Daugherty’s statement. The reality is regardless of the animal limit in the city there will be people who abuse and neglect animals.

Thousands of animals are dying in our shelters. They need our help now. One way we can do this is to allow people to have more animals. Many residents of LA have the means to have more animals but don’t because of restrictive animal limits. Obviously, everyone agrees that no one should be adopting more animals than they can handle, but they are by far in the minority. I believe that the increase in limits would help animal rescuers place more animals in homes thus allowing more animals to get out of the shelters.

#### WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM INCREASED ANIMAL LIMITS?

1. **Animals in the shelters** would have more options for homes.
2. **Homeowners** who have the space and finances to have another animal (or **save** another animal) would be able to adopt without concern of repercussions.
3. **Animal Rescues** that may need a foster home to take an extra animal.
4. **Animal Shelters** would be able to place more dogs thus lower the number of dogs they kill which would also free up funding for more constructive shelter programs.

#### WHO WOULD NOT BENEFIT FROM INCREASED ANIMAL LIMITS?

1. **Breeders** would continue to operate illegally by not spaying and neutering their animals and breeding without a license.
2. **Dog Fighters** would continue to operate illegally by committing cruel acts upon dogs, illegal tethering, drug use and sales, illegal weapon possession, etc.
3. **Animal Hoarders** would continue to collect animals well beyond the legal limits due to their mental illness.

There are many ways to protect the public from dangerous animals, hoarding and other fears that have been expressed in opposition to increasing the animal limits, but restricting people from having 5 dogs and/or 5 cats is not one of them. Instead, I would rather focus on the positive impact increasing the limit could have on the city and the shelter animal population.

Sincerely,



Lola McKnight  
Director  
Shelter Animal Advocacy Fund, Los Angeles