



Save Our Dogs

a grassroots effort to save working dogs
from AB 1634, mandatory spay/neuter

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July 4, 2007

Senate Local Government Committee
State Capitol, Room 112
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attention: Peter Detwiler

RE: AB 1634 "California Healthy Pets Act" as amended July 3, 2007 and all other versions —
OPPOSE

Dear Senator Negrete McLeod and Committee Members,

Save Our Dogs strongly opposes Assembly Bill 1634, the California Healthy Pets Act, as amended July 3, 2007. **This bill cannot be fixed with amendments.** We ask to be included in the listed opposition for the Bill Analysis of your Committee.

Save Our Dogs is a coalition whose purpose is to save working dogs from AB 1634. This coalition consists of one hundred and twenty-eight (128) organizations including law enforcement, service dog, guide dog, stock dog, search-and-rescue, hunting dog, rescue, dog training, and other organizations.

As the leaders of this coalition, Save Our Dogs restates the opposition to AB 1634 on behalf of the groups who make up this coalition. The attachment lists the members of the Save Our Dogs coalition.

In the July 3, 2007 amended version, AB 1634 now includes an intact eligibility option for *some* working stock dogs. This is totally inadequate to protect California's \$1.5 billion beef cattle industry or \$54 million sheep industry. The language only covers *a subset of the current generation of working stock dogs*. Many others are not covered given the restriction on where the dog's owner must reside. For example, in much of California, public land is leased for beef cattle or sheep grazing. These cattle or sheep are worked by stock dogs, and the owners of these dogs don't necessarily own or reside on land designated for agricultural use. They might live in town, on land designated for residential use. So their dogs would be subject to mandatory sterilization under AB 1634.

In addition, there would be no future generations of California-bred stock dogs under AB 1634, because very few of them are "used for herding or guarding livestock" when they are puppies. Almost all of the future generation of working stock dogs would be subject to mandatory sterilization before they would be eligible for an intact permit. This destroys the breeding population.

AB 1634 is now in its eighth revision in the four months that it has existed. It remains a fundamentally flawed bill that will not alleviate the problems it seeks to address. It would instead cause devastating unintended consequences to working dogs and those Californians who rely on working dogs for their

livelihoods, for public safety and emergency response, to serve important wildlife conservation goals, and to ease the burden of disabilities.

In spite of assurance to the contrary, the experts on working dogs are convinced that AB 1634, no matter how amended, will do great harm to working dogs in California. The Save Our Dogs web site is available at <http://saveourdogs.net>. This site provides information about AB 1634, its impact on working dogs, and the effort to defeat the bill.

Proponents of AB 1634 have promised every exemption imaginable to gain support for the bill. Yet in spite of all of these actual and promised exemptions, the organizations representing service dog programs that serve the disabled, guide dog programs for the blind, K9 law enforcement programs, K9 search and rescue programs, and California's stock dog industry still say the bill will destroy working dog programs, and that it cannot be amended to prevent this catastrophe. These organizations have studied the bill in its many versions with great care. They remain steadfastly opposed because they understand their programs and the devastating impact the bill would have.

Assembly Member Levine and the sponsors of this bill are not experts on working dogs. Not one working dog organization supports the bill because these experts know that any mandatory spay/neuter law will greatly reduce the population from which the next generation of working dogs must be selected. With each passing generation the working ability of the dogs will be reduced until the ability is lost.

AB 1634 is bad law. We urge you to oppose it. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Douglas Surber and Laura Sanborn
Founders, Save Our Dogs

attachment:
Save Our Dogs Coalition