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December 1, 2016

Re: Pet Care and Humane Treatment Study Committee

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the invitation to address the Committee regarding the broad topic of oversight.

I'm Joe Elmore, Chief Executive Officer of Charleston Animal Society. I live and work in Charleston County. I am also a very proud South Carolinian and Southerner.

I was our state's first Certified Animal Welfare Administrator. I am also a Certified Fund Raising Executive. I have been in the nonprofit sector throughout the United States for the past 30 years, specifically in animal welfare since 2004. I was with the ASPCA, the nation's first animal organization, for 6 years, traveling and consulting with numerous organizations across the southeast, providing me with a regional perspective about animal welfare issues.

Over 142 years old, Charleston Animal Society is South Carolina's first animal organization and one of the oldest in the nation. In 2013, Charleston Animal Society achieved what many, including industry professionals, thought unachievable at the time – launching the boldest animal rescue initiative ever undertaken in southeast to build the region's first No Kill Community. Not only was it successful, it has been sustained to this day.

Charleston Animal Society is unique, not better, relative to the over 350 animal organizations in South Carolina. It has 100 employees, 4,000 volunteers, 5 full-time veterinarians operating under a budget of over \$7 million and "placing its hands on approximately 20,000 animals each year." It also provides hands-on interactive education to over 16,000 students annually. It's mission since its inception 142 years ago has never changed – preventing cruelty to animals as part of a broader purpose all nonprofits and government agencies pursue – building safer and healthier communities in which to raise our families. The organization has become a model of success, not only across the state and region, but across the nation, earning national recognition. It is also South Carolina's most honored charity – 4 years in a row!

The organization works just as hard at raising resources as it does at saving lives.



It partners with a host of organizations statewide and all of the national animal organizations and has participated in multiple published research studies to advance the field of animal welfare.

In 2016, it launched No Kill South Carolina, an initiative even more challenging and bold than No Kill Charleston in 2013. It's mission is to build a statewide infrastructure of animal organizations so that no county is more than an hour's drive away from a key resource center ("help") providing a springboard for local communities to launch No Kill initiatives if they choose.

Regarding the specific issue of oversight:

I recommend that the Committee establish a system of oversight for any individual, organization, agency or business responsible for the care, husbandry or custodianship, temporary or permanent, of companion animals – this includes animal shelters, animal rescue organizations, veterinary clinics or hospitals, boarding facilities, breeders, groomers and others. It can be done, but needs to be completely thought out in order to be done correctly, meaning both efficiently and effectively.

Thorough, recognized and updated standards exist in each and every phase of animal welfare – this does not need to be recreated.

National industry standards include, but are not limited to:

- Association of Shelter Veterinarians Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters
- Society of Animal Welfare Administrators Companion Animal Transport Best Practices
- National Animal Care and Control Association Guidelines
- American Animal Hospital Association Accreditation Standards
- Association of Shelter Veterinarians Veterinary Medical Care Guidelines for Spay-Neuter Programs
- American Kennel Club Guidelines for Responsible Breeding

In addition, for the first time in our nation's history, the launch of a national animal sheltering data base has been initiated and backed by all of the national animal organizations. There is no cost for participation, and, thus, no excuse to opt out. I recommend the Committee require all organizations involved in animal sheltering, both in-home or in a physical plant, to participate.

Many states have enacted laws and regulations addressing the oversight of animals. While many look good on paper, few are effective due to two overriding reasons – lack of resources and resolve.



However, I urge the Committee to explore the system of oversight in Delaware. It is well thought out and could be a valuable resource for South Carolina.

Companion animal welfare is a controversial issue due to the lifesaving nature of it. There are two problems that need to be, but are rarely, efficiently and effectively addressed on a communitywide basis – (1) Overpopulation and (2) Unnecessary Euthanasia. It requires an extremely high volume of outputs to begin to solve the outcomes of (1) reducing overpopulation and (2) reducing euthanasia.

Animal welfare is both complicated and simple. The complicated part is reducing the population of, not one but two, species of animals – canines and felines, while managing the positive and negative intervention of a third species – humans. The simple part is you cannot have positive animal flow without positive cash flow and vice versa.

Most importantly, it requires collaboration. All of us need to put aside our differences in working toward solving these problems. We need to learn from the past four years of fighting and never repeat that process again.

We need to repel the notion that South Carolina is at the bottom, can only follow and never lead. We have proven that, indeed, South Carolina can lead.

Charleston Animal Society is committed to continue assisting the Committee in its efforts.

Thank you again for your work and hearing my remarks.

