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November 26, 2018

TO: Chairman Hackett and Members of the Ohio Senate Agriculture Committee

RE: Veterinary SUPPORT for banning use of gas chambers in Ohio shelters (HB 552)

Dear Chairman Hackett and Members of the Ohio Senate Agriculture Committee:

I am writing today on behalf of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association (HSVMA)--a national organization of approximately 9,200 veterinary professionals with more than 400 Ohio members--in support of House Bill 552, which would ban the use of gas chambers for the purpose of euthanizing dogs, cats and other animals in Ohio shelters. Passage of the measure will prohibit this ineffective, inefficient, and inhumane method of killing animals in Ohio.

We have many concerns about the use of gas chambers for euthanasia of companion animals including:

- 1. Gas chambers are associated with pain, distress and potentially protracted deaths in animals.** Shelters frequently house very young, elderly, sick or injured animals whose compromised physiology includes poor circulation, weak hearts and/or diminished lung capacity. Prior to actually losing consciousness and dying from the poison gas delivered in the dark gas chambers, the dying process for these animals could be significantly lengthened by these health conditions.
- 2. Gas chambers are potentially harmful to human personnel.** Inhaled agents used to euthanize animals in gas chambers are potentially hazardous to shelter personnel because of the risk of leaky or faulty equipment or narcosis.

Euthanasia by injection (EBI) is accepted in the veterinary community as the most humane currently available method, since it is generally painless and takes effect rapidly. In addition to HSVMA, the American Veterinary Medical Association has declared that gas chambers are not acceptable for routine euthanasia of dogs and cats and has instead identified EBI as the preferred method of euthanasia. The Association of Shelter Veterinarians has also condemned the use of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and other non-anesthetic gas chambers for ending the lives of dogs and cats.

We strongly support passage of this ban on the use of gas chambers to ensure that animals being euthanized in Ohio shelters have the benefit of a painless death. In ridding the state of gas chambers, Ohio will join many other states--including Arizona, California, Idaho, Illinois, New Mexico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas--in making this inhumane practice illegal.

Sincerely,

Barbara Hodges, DVM, MBA
HSVMA Veterinary Adviser