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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Leading Animal Welfare Organizations Herald State Support for Grants Benefiting People Experiencing Homelessness and Their Pets

California's 2019-20 budget includes \$5 million to support veterinary care and other pet-related needs for those experiencing homelessness.

July 3, 2019 – Three animal welfare organizations are applauding the newly enacted 2019-20 state budget's inclusion of \$5 million in grants to ensure the State of California supports local efforts to aid people experiencing homelessness and their pets. San Diego Humane Society, San Francisco SPCA and Front Street Animal Shelter have been working diligently in their communities to highlight the significance of the human-animal bond for people experiencing homelessness.

The budget funding is aligned with Senate Bill 258, authored by Senator Robert Hertzberg (D-Van Nuys), which requires the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop and administer a program that awards grants to qualified agencies that provide housing for homeless people with pets. Senate Bill 258 passed the state Senate and today passed the Assembly Housing and Community Development committee.

“At least 9,000 people are experiencing homelessness every night in San Diego. Of those, nearly 5,000 men, women and children lie down to sleep each night on sidewalks, in doorways, canyons and alleys. Some choose to live in their car for lack of pet friendly or affordable housing,” said Gary Weitzman, MPH, DVM, CAWA, CEO and president of the San Diego Humane Society. “Those experiencing homelessness with pets have said repeatedly that their companion animals are all they have and give them a purpose and reason to live.”

“Homelessness is one of the most critical issues we're facing in the San Francisco community,” said Jennifer Scarlett, DVM, president of the San Francisco SPCA. “How to provide veterinary care for the pets of those experiencing homelessness is a problem for many organizations. This funding will help make a significant impact and provide life-saving services to those who might otherwise go without. We are immeasurably grateful to Senator Hertzberg, the state legislature, and Governor Newsom for recognizing this and providing these new funds.”

“If we are ever to solve the homeless crisis, we must address the animal component,” said Gina Knepp, manager of the City of Sacramento's Front Street Animal Shelter. “Pets are family, the human animal bond is not diminished whether living on the streets or living in a home. The positive impact on the lives of pet owners experiencing homelessness will rise with this humane and humanitarian effort supporting both ends of the leash.”



About San Diego Humane Society

San Diego Humane Society's scope of social responsibility goes beyond adopting animals. We offer programs that strengthen the human-animal bond, prevent cruelty and neglect, provide medical care, educate the community and serve as a safety net for all pet families. Serving San Diego County since 1880, San Diego Humane Society has campuses located in Escondido, Oceanside and San Diego. For more information; please visit sdhumane.org.

About San Francisco SPCA

The San Francisco SPCA is an independent, community-supported, non-profit animal welfare organization dedicated to saving, protecting and providing immediate care for cats and dogs who are homeless, ill or in need of an advocate. The SF SPCA also works long-term to educate the community, reduce the number of unwanted kittens and puppies through spaying and neutering, and improve the quality of life for animals and their human companions. The organization does not receive government funding and is not affiliated with any national organization. For more information, call the SF SPCA at (415) 554-3000 or visit fspca.org.

About Front Street Shelter

The Front Street Animal Shelter serves the City of Sacramento's residents and animals. We strive to be a valued resource for everyone in our community, focusing on lost pet reunification, adoption and intensive investigation of animal abuse and cruelty. As an open municipal shelter, we are proud to represent our community and the animals that live among us. For information, please visit www.frontstreetshelter.org.

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