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San Diego Humane Society Celebrates Favorable Final Decision in Community Cat Program Lawsuit

SAN DIEGO — San Diego Humane Society (SDHS) is delighted with the June 9, 2025, final decision issued by the San Diego Superior Court in *Pet Assistance Foundation et al. v. San Diego Humane Society*.

In her ruling, Judge Katherine Bacal explicitly affirmed the legality of the organization's lifesaving Community Cat Program. SDHS will continue operating its program exactly as they have been since February 2025. The ruling outright rejects plaintiff's request that a cat's socialization status be considered when determining a cat's eligibility for the program – the issue at the heart of the case all along.



The court's decision:

- **Affirms the legality of SDHS's revised Community Cat Program.** The court expressly found that the February 2025 revisions to its Community Cat Program protocols comply with California law and may remain in force.
- **Rejects plaintiffs' attempts to inject cat temperament or sociability into the legal analysis.** The judgment explicitly confirms that a cat's temperament is not a reliable ownership indicator and is irrelevant to the legality of humane return-to-field practices.

By affirming SDHS's program, the Court aligned with expert opinion by recognizing that returning cats to their outdoor homes after a medical exam and sterilization is a supportable way to manage community cats.

"This ruling is a resounding endorsement of our evidence-based, expert-endorsed, lifesaving approach to community cats," said Dr. Gary Weitzman, President and CEO of SDHS. "It allows us to continue providing critical medical care, spay/neuter and safe return for unowned cats while reserving shelter space for animals who truly need it."

SDHS is deeply grateful to its legal team at O'Melveny and Meyers for their pro bono representation of the organization, as well as the San Francisco SPCA for their coordination and oversight of its legal efforts through their Shelter Policy and Legal Services program ([Shelter PALS](#)).

SDHS remains committed to working collaboratively with residents, rescue partners and policymakers to create a safer, healthier community for people and animals. For more information on SDHS's Community Cat Program, including FAQs and research resources, please visit sdhumane.org/communitycats.



Photos/b-roll of San Diego Humane Society's Community Cat Program for media use can be downloaded here:

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/uNiHlowpc2>

Photo/video credit: San Diego Humane Society

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 in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego. For more information, visit sdhumane.org.

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