

THLN's POSITION STATEMENT ON HB 3450

HB 3450 relating to restrictions on the operations of both public and private animal shelters in Texas raises numerous complicated and controversial issues ranging from shelter policies on adoptions and euthanasia to holding periods, sterilization, owner surrenders, lost animals, feral cats, required services, and reporting requirements. The bill named the "Companion Animal Protection Act of 2011" is over thirty pages long and starts with the admirable statement of intent "*to curtail the killing of savable animals in Texas.*"

THLN strongly supports and endorses the stated intent of this bill; however, THLN was not made aware of the bill until it was filed on March 11, 2011 and was not involved in its drafting or in discussions of the issues included in the bill. Further, to THLN's knowledge few, if any, of the many public and private shelters in this state who are the true "stakeholders" were consulted or had input into the drafting of the bill.

It is THLN's belief that it would be more productive to defer this legislation to the 2013 legislative session so it can be fully reviewed and discussed by the entire Texas animal welfare community. This will give all stakeholders the opportunity to debate the issues, offer their ideas as to solutions to the problems addressed and to determine how to best achieve the solutions sought by the bill – whether through statewide legislation or local ordinances or incentives. THLN recommends that consideration of this bill be postponed and the entire Texas animal welfare community, the Texas Veterinary Medical Association, the Texas Animal Control Association, the Texas Municipal League and other interested parties work together during the interim period with the goal of bringing a comprehensive and well thought through bill next session that can be supported and endorsed by all stakeholders.