



January 15, 2016

The Hon. Jerry Petrowski
Wisconsin State Senate
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707

The Hon. John Spiros
Wisconsin State Assembly
P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708

Re: Request for Amendments on AB 487/SB 450

Dear Senator Petrowski and Assembly Member Spiros,

On behalf of our members and supporters in Wisconsin, we are writing with concerns about AB 487/SB 450, as currently written. While we support the provisions to allow the placement of abused dogs and we support the intent of the bill to reduce length of stay and place animals quicker, the latter provisions are poorly written and counterproductive.

Reducing the holding period from seven to four days would, in many if not most cases, allow shelters to kill animals before their families have an opportunity to reclaim them. Holding periods do not have to be an "either-or" proposition: *either* they are longer *or* they are shorter. They can offer the best of both worlds if they are *smarter*. In other words, they can achieve the positive outcomes for animals you seek without putting animals at risk for being killed more quickly.

Specifically, we recommend the following amendment:

(a) The required holding period for stray animals shall be seven business days, not including the day of impoundment, subject to the following:

(1) Animals impounded without identification shall be held for owner redemption during the first four days of the holding period, not including the day of impoundment, and shall be available for owner redemption, transfer, and adoption for the remainder of the holding period.

(2) Shelters may transfer an animal impounded without identification at any time after impound to an IRC Section 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that is a (i) animal rescue group, (ii) private animal shelter, or (iii) organization formed for the prevention of cruelty to animals, as long as potential owners are afforded the same rights of reclamation as if the animals were still in the shelter.

a. Whenever an animal is transferred pursuant to this provision, a photograph of the animal and all information pertaining to the animal's impoundment and transfer (including the location where the animal was found, the date of impoundment, the date

of transfer, and the name of and contact information for the receiving organization) shall be maintained in electronic, searchable and publicly reviewable form at the shelter and on the shelter's website at least until the end of the reclamation period.

(3) An owner that satisfies a shelter's reclaim requirements before the expiration of the holding period is entitled to reclaim the animal even if the animal has been transferred pursuant to subsection (a) (2) and is no longer physically in the shelter's custody. At the owner's discretion, the owner has the right to physically redeem the animal at the shelter.

(4) An IRC Section 501(c)(3) organization which receives an animal pursuant to subsection (a)(2) must return the animal for reclamation pursuant to subsection (a)(3) and is liable to the owner for failure to do so.

(b) The required holding period for an owner relinquished animal shall be seven business days, not including the day of impoundment.

(1) The animals shall be available for owner redemption, transfer, and adoption for the entirety of the holding period.

(c) The holding periods required by sections (a) and (b) of this provision do not apply to cats who are impounded solely for the purpose of sterilization and are then returned to the location where they were found.

(d) An animal who is irremediably suffering physically shall be euthanized without delay, upon a determination made in writing and signed by a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in this state. "Irremediable physical suffering" means an animal who has a poor or grave prognosis for being able to live without severe, unremitting pain even with prompt, necessary, and comprehensive veterinary care.

This amendment allows for sterilization and release, allows shelters to transfer animals to rescue groups right away, and allows shelters to adopt animals out as quickly as the current language. Furthermore, it requires shelters to use some of the holding period to make animals available for adoption instead of keeping them in the back and killing them as soon as it is over. What it does *not* allow is for shelters to kill animals out of convenience as the bills currently do. This amendment will save more lives, while also increasing revenue and decreasing costs, a win for animals, a win for animal lovers, and a win for Wisconsin taxpayers.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Nathan J. Winograd