



THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS®

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BUDGET TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT
\$10 MILLION FOR THE NYS COMPANION ANIMAL CAPITAL FUND (CACF)

2023 EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL -- ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
JOINT LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARING – FEBRUARY 14, 2023

On behalf of our 230,000 New York State supporters, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) urges the Senate and Assembly to renew the legislature’s traditional support for the NYS Companion Animal Capital Fund (CACF). To date, this forward-thinking initiative has assisted over 50 shelters with capital improvements, from underwriting portions of new buildings to supporting improvements and expansions at existing facilities.

New York has now made a \$28 million investment in this groundbreaking initiative. Currently, however, the collective capital needs of such lifesaving facilities remain at well over \$60 million and likely much more. **Given the popularity of the CACF and the extent of the need, we respectfully ask that you include a \$10 million allocation for the program in the 2022-23 State Budget.**

This funding will be especially timely over the course of the next few years, as animal shelters and rescue organizations look toward implementing the uniform facility improvements established in the Companion Animal Care Standards Act signed last December (Chapter 683 of the Laws of 2022). Long overdue, these new requirements – proposed by the NYS Animal Protection Federation using Association of Shelter Veterinarians (ASV) guidelines – bring New York into the 21st century and speak specifically to a shelter’s physical plant from floor covering to animal spaces to air handling.

In addition, it has become clear at this point in the CACF’s history that small municipalities and shelters alike hesitate to apply for a grant given current matching fund requirements. The language in the Governor’s proposal decreases the match across the board to 10% except for those shelters in municipalities with a population of two million or more. That match still stands at 25%, and we feel that decreasing that match to 10% as well will keep the fund equitable to all.

Further, we implore you to implement a crucial expansion of program eligibility. Currently, only municipal and not-for-profit shelters can apply, but with the enactment of the aforementioned Care Standards Act, all organizations that presently register with the Department of Agriculture and Markets should be eligible to do so. To accomplish this goal, the budget language should be changed to read as follows: *“Municipal shelters established pursuant to Section 114 of the Agriculture and Markets Law and any entity registered by the Department of Agriculture and Markets pursuant to the provisions of section 408 of the Agriculture and Markets Law.”*

The ASPCA also supports Governor Hochul’s inclusion of \$2.14 million in her budget proposal to allow the Department’s Division of Animal Industry to hire staff and obtain the additional resources needed to implement and provide the oversight called for in the Care Standards Act. This is imperative, as the agency could be licensing and inspecting more than 400 new entities when the law becomes effective in December 2025.

We know you care about New York’s vulnerable animal populations – your actions supporting bold and forward-leaning protections for some of the most vulnerable in our communities last session speak for themselves. Thank you for your support and for your consideration of this request, which will pay dividends to sheltering groups and municipal governments for ages to come.