

February 1, 2012

Honorable Mayor Teresa Tomlinson  
Government Center Tower, 6th Floor  
100 10th St.  
Columbus, GA 31901

Via e-mail [ttomlinson@columbusga.org](mailto:ttomlinson@columbusga.org)

Dear Mayor Tomlinson:

We hope this letter finds you well. We've followed with interest recent news reports regarding the Columbus Animal Shelter and public pressure to lower the shelter's euthanasia rates. I'm enclosing information that we hope will be helpful (please excuse the delay in our letter—I tried numerous times to send this information via e-mail, including from my personal hotmail account and with your assistant Lacey's help, but each time it was returned as undeliverable).

On a daily basis, our office receives reports of shelters pressured to lower their euthanasia numbers by individuals and groups unfamiliar with the inner workings of animal care and control facilities (or the daily challenges and heartbreaks that shelter workers face), or, in some cases, efforts by volunteers or staff members to implement troublesome policies that are not in the animals' best interests, such as warehousing animals for months, keeping animals in cramped cages and kennels designed only for temporary housing (which promotes disease transmission in addition to being inhumane), keeping animals in makeshift quarters when regular cages and kennels are full, and more.

We realize that no one wants to euthanize, least of all the people who work at the shelter, but the sad reality is that animals who are not adopted and not adoptable don't benefit in any way from being kept alive with little to no hope of adoption, and they become less adoptable with each passing day. In the best economy, there are simply too many animals and not enough homes for them all, and with the current downturn, shelters (often already burdened with staff and budget shortages) must struggle even harder to manage the increasing numbers of unwanted animals streaming through their doors. The following are just a few recent examples of such policies gone awry and I've also attached information about the so-called "no-kill movement" that I hope is helpful:

- **San Antonio, TX: Hope for No-Kill Shelter in 2012 Dies**  
<http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/politics/article/No-no-kill-in->

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An international organization  
dedicated to protecting the  
rights of all animals.

Affiliates:

PETA Foundation (U.K.)  
PETA Asia-Pacific  
PETA India  
PETA Germany  
PETA Netherlands

[2012-1436038.php](#); also see attached editorial *ACS No-Kill Policy Only Masks Problem*, which cites animal bites doubled

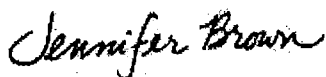
- **Indianapolis, IN:** *Shake-up at Animal Care and Control*  
<http://www.wthr.com/Global/story.asp?s=11188092&clienttype=printable>
- **Detroit, MI:** *Michigan Humane Says Doors are Open to All*  
<http://www.clickondetroit.com/news/28967342/detail.html#story>
- **Niagara Falls, Ontario:** *No-Kill Policy Dropped*  
<http://www.niagarafallsreview.ca/ArticleDisplay.aspx?archive=true&e=2927359>
- **East Baton Rouge, LA:** *New Operators Say Staff Overwhelmed*  
<http://theadvocate.com/home/675101-79/new-operators-say-staff-overwhelmed.html>;  
*Crowded No-Kill Shelter to Start Emergency Euthanasia* <http://www.nbc33tv.com/all-about-animals/crowded-no-kill-shelter-to-start-emergency-euthanasia-due-to-overpopulation>

Additionally, some shelters see “rescuers” as a solution to reducing euthanasia or easing overcrowding (sadly, the overwhelming numbers of animals in need of homes make it impossible for shelters to adopt their way out of the dog and cat overpopulation crisis), either by choice or under outside pressures, and we routinely see cases where animals are found suffering in horrific conditions after being released by local shelters to those promising they’ll find homes for them but who aren’t in a position to do so. In fact, such incidents just recently occurred in North Carolina, Illinois, New Jersey, and New York along the Vermont border, where local government shelters released groups of animals to so-called rescuers who were later charged with animal cruelty after sick, dying, and dead animals were discovered on their properties. We respectfully urge the city—if it hasn’t already—to implement a policy whereby animals are released only through adoption or to quality placement partners (I’ve attached guidelines in case it’s helpful) who’ve been carefully screened and their properties inspected to see conditions firsthand.

Please know that PETA supports the good work of open-door shelters. We hope you’ll consider us a resource.

Thank you for your time and attention and for your hard work for Columbus citizens. I can be contacted at 630-966-8895 or [JenniferB@peta.org](mailto:JenniferB@peta.org).

Sincerely,



Jennifer Brown, Animal Sheltering Advisor  
Cruelty Investigations Department