



City of Westminster

CIVIC CENTER
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COUNCIL MEMBER

RAMON SILVER
CITY MANAGER

March 5, 2009



Ms. Ann Avery Andres
Foreman

Orange County Grand Jury
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Dear Ms. Avery Andres:

This letter is submitted in response to the Grand Jury Report "Is Orange County Going to the Dogs".

Finding F-1:

Some cities using limited access shelters are sending animals deemed unadoptable to the County Animal Shelter, thereby shifting the cost and responsibility for care and euthanasia to the County if the animals are not adopted.

Response:

The City of Westminster *disagrees* with the finding. The City of Westminster provides full animal control services and contracts with The Orange County Humane Society (OCHS), a privately owned shelter, for all sheltering needs. All animals found within Westminster are housed at OCHS, regardless if they are deemed adoptable or not. Owner relinquished animals are never turned away.

The only instance when a pet owner may be referred to Orange County Animal Services (OCAS) is when an owner requests immediate euthanasia. Although we provide this service, there is a fee involved. If the owner is unable or unwilling to pay this fee other less expensive options, such as referral to a local veterinary office or Orange County Animal Services are provided to the pet owner. However, if the pet owner is willing to pay the Westminster fee, the pet is accepted and transported to OCHS.

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Recommendation R-1:

The cities utilizing limited-access shelters adopt an open-shelter policy for all dogs and cats within their city limits or reimburse the County Shelter for the expense of boarding and euthanizing animals from their cities.

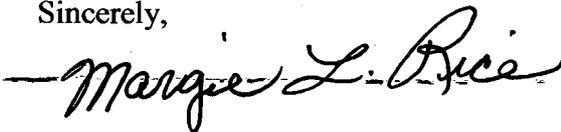
Response:

The City of Westminster *disagrees* with this recommendation, as we already operate with an open-shelter policy. Animals within the Westminster city limits are always accepted by Westminster Animal Control and OCHS. In reality, we believe many of the stray animals we locate are, in fact, from neighboring jurisdictions that contract with OCAS. Nonetheless, these animals are recovered without question of jurisdiction, and transported to our contract provider, the OCHS. Additionally, all owner surrendered animals are accepted. Other options, such as private adoption and referrals to rescue organizations, are discussed with the owner; however, if their decision remains to surrender their pet, the animal is accepted without further question or referral.

It is our intent to provide full-service Animal Control. Currently, we believe we are providing this service to our community. We would encourage OCAS to reconsider their policy and redirect pet owners away if they believe the animals originate from a non-contract city.

Thank you for providing us this opportunity to respond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margie L. Rice". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of a horizontal line.

MARGIE L. RICE

Mayor