



Madam Chairman Schwartz and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
300 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612

March 9th, 2015

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,

As the President and CEO of Great Plains SPCA, a non-profit animal welfare organization serving more than 35,000 pets and their human companions in Kansas every year and as the President of PACK (Pet Animal Coalition of Kansas), I stand before you today in support of HB2175 and ask for your vote to move this important bill forward as written with no amendments.

My career has been dedicated to this industry for more than 20 years and I have served on local and national committees to drive innovative changes for companion animals in Kansas, Missouri and North Carolina. It is my belief we share the desire for our state to enact laws that others will aspire to model. Unfortunately, Kansas is one of few states remaining in the nation where gas chambers are still legal.

HB2175 will prohibit this archaic and inhumane method to euthanize pets.

Ban of carbon monoxide (CO) chambers – HB 2175 eliminates the inhumane practice of use of carbon monoxide chambers to carry out euthanasia. Euthanasia by lethal injection of sodium pentobarbital has been named the most rapid, humane method of euthanasia by the American Veterinary Medical Association, the National Animal Control Association, the American Humane Association, HSUS and the ASPCA. Via lethal injection, pets pass within a matter of seconds with little to no risk to the handler. Use of the gas chamber is a lengthy, terrifying experience for the animal and has been proven to cause potential psychological effects, as well as harmful health risks or even death, to the operator. At present, most every state in the nation either prohibits the use of gas chambers or voluntarily elects not to use them.

I ask for your support to eliminate the use of gas chambers as a means of euthanasia in the state of Kansas, recognizing lethal injection as the most humane form of euthanasia.

The bill is simple: Ban carbon monoxide (CO) chambers. Animals who are euthanized by carbon monoxide are subjected to, at best, minutes of panic, terror, suffocation, and torture. The animal is still conscious while his vital organs begin to shut down. Once multiple animals are stuffed into the metal box, it takes several minutes for the gas to suffocate the pets inside and render them unconscious. Sadly, it isn't uncommon for the process not to work the first time, meaning that animals are subject to this process multiple times in a row before the outcome of death is achieved. This is not how we want to be known for caring for the animals in our state.

Lastly, gas chambers are more expensive to operate and use more resources than alternative and humane methods because they require maintenance and proper equipment in order to run efficiently. Conversely, the

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Veterinary Care Center
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Pet Adoption Center
5424 Antioch Drive | Merriam, KS 66202

Lost Pet & Intake Center
9800 West 67th Street | Merriam, KS 66203



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approved euthanasia drugs that we are introducing as a humane alternative in HB 2175 are less expensive and easier to use.

HB 2175 is a component of HB 2030, a bill that I testified as a proponent of on January 22nd, but it did not make it to the floor for a vote. It is my belief that HB 2175 represents the most critical component of HB 2030 as it would immediately and drastically improve the welfare of companion animals. Please pass HB2175 with no amendments.

I have learned that there may be efforts to amend the contents of HB 2030 into HB 2175 to lower fees and exempt smaller breeding practices, known as "Hobby Breeders" that produce few litters a year. I am adamantly opposed to these potential amendments as exempting any commercial breeder, regardless of the volume of sales, sets Kansas back. It is important that we remain focused and proceed with legislation that takes the best interest of animals into account.

Great Plains SPCA is proud to serve the state of Kansas, and together with PACK (Pet Animal Coalition of Kansas) we ask for your vote in favor of HB2175

If I can provide any additional information or answer any questions, please know I am willing.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Courtney Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Courtney Thomas
President/CEO Great Plains SPCA
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