



Animal Protective Association of Socorro

Barks and Mews

April 2019 Newsletter

Animal Welfare Legislation: 2019 Update

During the 2019 New Mexico legislative session (January 15–March 16) the Senate and House deliberated on several bills relevant to our pets and wildlife. Animal Protection Voters of New Mexico (APVNM), whose mission is to promote and support animal-friendly legislation at local, state, and federal levels, tracked dozens of bills and vigorously fought for four priority bills. The fate of those four bills is summarized here.

Senate Bill 367, Pet Food Fee for Neutering and Sheltering.

Introduced for the third time in 2019, this legislation was proposed in corresponding bills in the Senate and the House. The House bill died in committee. The Senate version passed the Public Affairs Committee in mid-February and was referred to the Senate Finance Committee. As was the case in 2017, SB 367 never received a vote in the Finance Committee.

This legislation was introduced in 2017 and again in 2018 in response to requests from the State Legislature and state agencies to develop affordable and accessible spay/neuter resources for New Mexico. Existing funding mechanisms, a spay-neuter license plate and a voluntary tax check-off program, have not generated enough revenue for a comprehensive, statewide, subsidized spay/neuter program. SB 367

would have charged pet food manufacturers an annual fee of \$100 for each of their pet food products sold in New Mexico, phased in over a three-year period. The fee would not have been applied to live-stock feed, small manufacturers with less than \$3 million annual gross revenue, or prescription diets. A similar bill introduced last year passed the Senate 30–4 and the House 48–19 with bipartisan support, but it was vetoed by Governor Martinez.

SB 367 was widely supported by county and municipal governments, animal shelters, and animal humane groups (including APAS) throughout the state. By the end of the 3-year phase-in period the fee would have generated about \$1.1 million each year for spaying/neutering approximately 20,000 dogs and cats. APVNM estimated that local government animal control departments and shelters would save about \$500,000 every year. If the increased fee

were passed on to the consumer, APVNM estimated an average annual cost to the consumer of \$1.13 to \$2.26 per year.

Senate Bill 76, to Prohibit Coyote Killing Contests. Days before the 2019 legislative session began, New Mexico's land commissioner, Stephanie Garcia Richard, signed an executive order banning wild-



New Mexico State Capitol, site of the 2019 60-day legislative session. In both the House and Senate 1,370 bills were introduced, but only 309 were passed by both chambers.



Coyote pups at a drinker made from an old tire on Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. The photo, taken by a motion-activated camera, courtesy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

life-killing contests on the 9 million acres of state trust land. The executive order would not prohibit individuals from “lawfully entering, occupying or using state trust lands from promptly and humanely removing or killing a specific offending animal causing depredation to agricultural and companion animals...”.

Senate Bill 76 was introduced to extend the executive order statewide throughout New Mexico. It survived several Senate and House committee hearings, a full Senate vote of 22–17, and a full House vote of 37–30. Supporters of SB 76 argued

- that killing contests, typically between 20 and 30 annually, are a senseless barbaric practice.
- that indiscriminate killing of as many animals as possible ignores the values of conservation and ethical hunting, and the importance of predators in maintaining an ecological balance.
- that scientific research shows random mass killing of coyotes disrupts pack social structure, increases breeding within the pack, and results in overall population growth.

SB 76 was the only one of APVNM’s four priority bills to pass the legislature. Governor Lujan-Grisham signed the bill into law on April 2.

House Bill 366, Wildlife Protection and Public Safety Act. This legislation, restricting traps, snares, and poisons on New Mexico’s public lands, was also known as “Roxy’s Law”.

HB 366 was sponsored in memory of Roxy, and 8-year-old heeler who was caught in a neck snare and died while on a BLM trail with her owner last fall. Roxy’s story is not unique. Every year traps and snares indiscriminately maim and kill dogs and wildlife, including protected species. (To find more complete information on this issue, visit the web site of TrapFree New Mexico, a coalition of 13 animal welfare and conservation groups.)

HB 366 passed two House committees, Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources on February 9 and Judiciary on February 26, but its progress was halted as it reached the full House floor.

House Bill 218, Equine Facility Purchase of Certain Horses. This legislation, ensuring only humane disposition for horses in the custody of the New Mexico Livestock Board, would have given New Mexico’s horse rescue groups the first right to take in homeless horses (strays, cruelty case seizures, or owner relinquished horses).

Current law allows seized or abandoned horses be disposed of through auctions, where horse rescue groups must compete with the killer-buyers who sell them for slaughter in Mexico. A 2013 poll showed that 70% of New Mexican voters oppose the slaughter of horses for human consumption. Supporters of HB 218 argued that similar humanitarian considerations suggest state statutes should prioritize humane disposition of horses.

HB 218 had bipartisan support in both the House and Senate, passing two committees unanimously and the full House by a vote of 57 to 2, but it died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Many bills, such as these, are introduced multiple times and can take years to reach the governor's desk. Continued support and advocacy are needed for legislation to succeed. For more details on these bills and the other animal-welfare legislation introduced during the 2019 legislative session, go to the web site of Animal Protection Voters of New Mexico (APVNM.org).

—Jane Love

Other wildlife bills signed by the governor include:

SB 228, Wildlife Corridors Act, which directs the Departments of Game and Fish and Transportation to identify highways and other human barriers that pose a risk to wildlife migration, and develop projects that minimize habitat fragmentation, allow for safe wildlife passage, and increase public safety.

SB 234, Pollinator Protection License Plate. Fees from the sale of the license plate will support pollinator protection projects, such as planting native flowers and grasses along our highways. New Mexico students in 4th through 9th grades helped write this bill as part of the Wild Friends Educational Program started by the University of New Mexico law school.

SB 383, Game Commission Fair Chase Rulemaking, which allows the Game and Fish Department to temporarily withhold certain data (such as GPS collar locations) from public information requests to prevent individuals from unfairly using that data to locate and kill those animals.

Spring Yard Sale

Saturday, April 27, and Sunday, April 28, 8:00 am–1:00 pm
901 Duggins Lane (east off Chaparral, 1 mile north of Otero)

The annual spring yard sale is APAS's largest fund raiser of the year, all proceeds going to low-fee spay/neuter procedures for low-income city and county

residents. In 2018 APAS contributed \$150.00 toward each qualifying procedure, spaying and neutering 175 pets.



Donations (no clothes, please) can be dropped off at the Duggins Lane address Saturday and Sunday, April 20 and 21, from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm and Monday through Thursday, April 22–25, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. If you'd like to donate a large item and need a pickup, call APAS President, Connie Robnett, at 575-835-1430.



Animal Protective Association of Socorro

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Each membership type is entitled to one vote in APAS elections and motions and will receive one newsletter per address/email. Should you wish your donation to be anonymous, please mark so clearly on this form.

Please mail this form and donation to: APAS, PO Box 451, Socorro, NM 87801.

Donation:

____ \$50 Silver ____ \$100 Gold ____ \$150 Platinum ____ \$250 Business sponsor*

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