

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 23, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

As you continue to negotiate and draft further legislation to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we respectfully urge you to consider the funding needs of animal shelters and rescue organizations that are working diligently to provide emergency services that benefit animals and public health more broadly. Specifically, federal funding should be included in any upcoming aid package to help non-profit animal shelters and rescues as they face workforce issues and supply shortages in addition to financial distress, including those that are educating the public about the basic elements of pet care and welfare, and those that are providing emergency services and animal control or adoption services, which are recognized as public health services for the benefit of local communities.

We are a nation of pet lovers and these local institutions play a vital role in promoting public health by helping to keep pets with their families and in making every American community a better and safer place for people and animals. The 2017-2018 American Veterinary Medical Association Sourcebook states that 74.4 million American households have at least one pet. Some 80 percent of those households consider pets to be members of their families, and a large percentage of them have acquired their pets from animal shelters and rescue groups. Despite the workforce issues and supply shortages caused by this pandemic, many shelters still provide emergency services such as attending to injured or sick stray animals, cruelty and neglect complaints, bite complaints, and dangerous and aggressive dog complaints.

In this difficult time, the organizations that care for and adopt out animals are heavily engaged in disseminating information and providing direct services to citizens, designed to help them ensure the safety and well-being of their pets. Many of these organizations provide access to emergency pet food for families struggling to feed their pets, as well as basic services and veterinary care, and valuable counsel and support regarding pet health and nutrition. Amid this crisis, these services remain vital in keeping pets and families together and in helping to stave off an increase in pets being surrendered to shelters or abandoned in this time of crisis.

There are an estimated 3,500 brick and mortar animal shelters and 10,000 rescue groups in the United States providing services for pets in our communities. In addition, agencies and private authorities with animal control contracts spend approximately \$800 million to \$1 billion annually to pick-up, treat, and promote the adoption of stray animals. This too is an important public

health service and should have funding as such for the benefit of millions of Americans, their pets, and their communities.

As our country continues to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to ensure that local and county governments have the resources they require to accommodate the immediate, increased needs of animal shelters and rescue organizations in any upcoming coronavirus response package. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

The letter was also signed by the following Members of Congress.

Thomas R. Suozzi	Susan Wild	Derek Kilmer
Salud Carbajal	Christopher H. Smith	Darren Soto
Donna Shalala	Vicente Gonzalez	James P. McGovern
Jan Schakowsky	Grace Meng	Susan A. Davis
Dina Titus	Stephanie Murphy	Brendan F. Boyle
Ann McLane Kuster	Raúl Grijalva	Alma S. Adams, Ph.D
Bill Posey	Yvette D. Clarke	Adam Smith
Jerry McNerney	Abby Finkenauer	Judy Chu
Lori Trahan	John Katko	Scott Peters
Madeleine Dean	Juan Vargas	Ami Bera
David Trone	Joyce Beatty	Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Kathy Castor	John Yarmuth	Charlie Crist
Chris Pappas	Conor Lamb	Cindy Axne
Ted Lieu	Debbie Dingell	Cheri Bustos
David N. Cicilline	Ayanna Pressley	Lisa Blunt Rochester
Barbara Lee	Colin Allred	Anna G. Eshoo
Earl Blumenauer	Jesús G. "Chuy" García	Ro Khanna
Tony Cárdenas	Lydia Velázquez	Daniel W. Lipinski
Bennie G. Thompson	Katie Porter	Josh Gottheimer
Peter A. DeFazio	Gerald E. Connolly	Jamie Raskin
Steve Cohen	Jason Crow	Bill Foster
Linda T. Sánchez	Gwen S. Moore	Katherine M. Clark
Andy Kim	Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.	Jimmy Panetta
Stephen Lynch	Alan Lowenthal	Mike Quigley
Tulsi Gabbard	Betty McCollum	David Price
Joe Neguse	Sean Patrick Maloney	John B. Larson
Anthony Brindisi	Marcy Kaptur	Veronica Escobar
Donald M. Payne, Jr.	Jackie Speier	