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House Bill 1124 Weakens Animal Protection Laws in Colorado, Animal Welfare Community Opposed

Denver (February 23, 2010) – Some might refer to Denver as “pet heaven,” and according to the Humane Society of the United States, Colorado is considered one of the top five states for animal protection laws. Yet, all of that could change if House Bill (HB) 1124 passes during the 2010 legislative session.

The Colorado Federation of the Animal Welfare Agencies (CFAWA), Colorado Association of Animal Control Officers (CAACO) and the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) strongly oppose HB 1124 due to the impending negative impact on animals and those who have sworn to protect them.

“The passage of HB 1124 would be a step backwards for the state of Colorado, in terms of protecting cats, dogs, other pets and horses,” said Lisa Pedersen, president of CFAWA. “More animals would suffer and, for this reason, we need pet lovers to contact their legislators and ask them vote ‘no’ for HB 1124.”

The current bill, which is up for a vote in the House of Representatives this week, would limit the ability of animal cruelty officers to investigate abuse cases and hold perpetrators accountable, as well as possibly silence people from reporting incidents of animal cruelty. In addition, the passage of HB 1124 would create a financial burden for animal welfare and government agencies, hindering their ability to care for more homeless pets in the community.

“This bill would result in more abused animals—like the huskies from the Park County sled dog seizure—remaining in abusive situations and prevent them from receiving the help they need and deserve,” said Joe Stafford, president of CAACO. “The impact of this bill becoming law would be detrimental for all of the companion animals in our state.”

More than 25 organizations oppose HB 1124, including: Colorado Municipal League, Colorado Counties Inc., American Society for the Prevention of Animal Cruelty (ASPCA), Dumb Friends League, Humane Society of Boulder Valley, Larimer Humane Society, Colorado Reptile Humane Society and the Rocky Mountain Alley Cat Alliance.

Animal lovers can voice their opposition to HB 1124 and take action online at <http://support.ddfl.org/opposeHB1124> or by contacting their legislator through votesmart.org.

About the Colorado Federation of Animal Welfare Agencies

Formed in 1954, the Colorado Federation of Animal Welfare Agencies (CFAWA) is a federation of 50 local, county, state and national animal welfare organizations with the goal of advancing collaboration, advocacy, and professional development within the Colorado animal welfare community. Through professional cooperation, education, research and legislative participation, CFAWA represents a powerful voice in the advocacy for the protection of companion animals, wildlife and livestock in Colorado.

About the Colorado Association of Animal Control Officers

The Colorado Association of Animal Control Officers (CAACO) is a non-profit organization formed in 1974 to improve the methods of animal control practice, inform the public about animal control, promote justice and equity in the enforcement of animal control laws and advance the health, welfare, professionalism and morale of all animal control officers in the state of Colorado. CAACO is comprised of more than 75 animal welfare organizations and 250 members. Please visit caaco.org for more information.

About the Colorado Veterinary Medical Association

The Colorado Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) exists to enhance animal health and welfare, promote the human-animal bond, protect public health and foster excellence in veterinary medicine through education, advocacy and outreach.

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