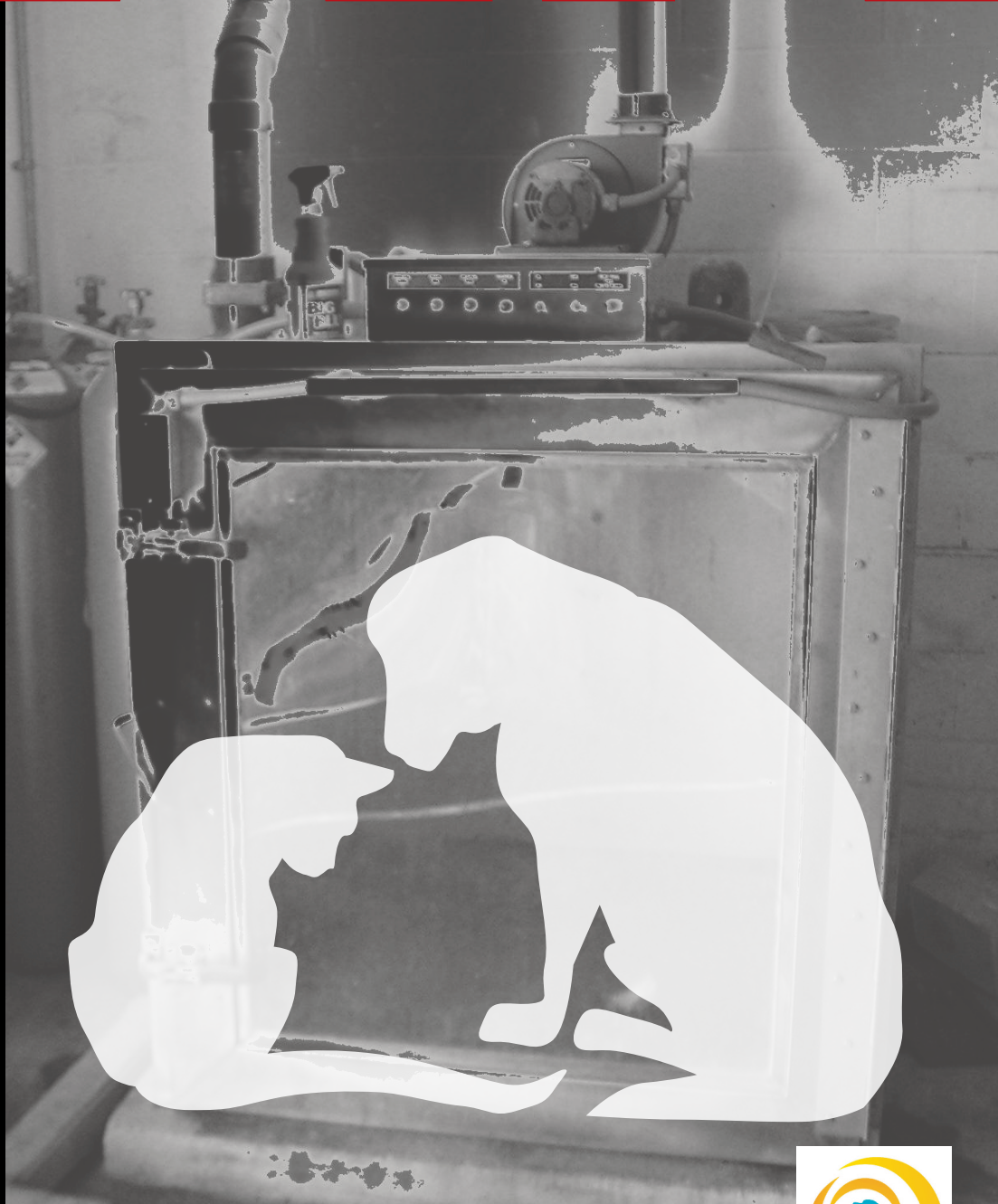


BAN

THE GAS CHAMBER



MODEL LEGISLATION



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Webster's dictionary defines euthanasia as "the act or practice of killing or permitting the death of hopelessly sick or injured individuals in a relatively painless way for reasons of mercy." Unfortunately, in many animal shelters across the nation, animals are not being killed because they are hopelessly sick or injured, but rather out of convenience, as "population control." In fact, millions of healthy and treatable animals needlessly lose their lives in our nation's shelters every year, and for many of them, their lives are taken not in a "relatively painless" way, but in one of the most prolonged and excruciating ways possible: the gas chamber.

THE GAS CHAMBER is one of the cruelest methods of legally killing an animal, an antiquated holdover from the 19th century when killing animals in this brutal manner first became widespread. Animals are crammed into small, closed chambers, piled one on top of the other. When the chamber is then filled with poisonous carbon monoxide (or carbon dioxide) gas, the animals inside gasp for breath, feel searing pain in their lungs and often claw at the chamber door or throw themselves against the sides in a desperate attempt to escape. Fights between animals within a chamber are not uncommon. They urinate and

defecate on themselves and each other. They suffer convulsions. And they lose consciousness and brain function only after their vital organs shut down, a process which can take as long as 30 minutes, causing intense and prolonged suffering before death. As an organization committed to reforming our nation's animal shelters so that they more accurately reflect the compassion and concern for companion animals to which the vast majority of Americans subscribe, the No Kill Advocacy Center believes it should be illegal to kill animals in shelters except for the small minority who are irremediably suffering, and then,

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only in the most humane way currently possible, using the method outlined in our model law. Until that time, we believe that shelters, at the very least, are obligated to ensure that when they do take the lives of animals, it is done in a manner that reduces, as much as possible, the suffering those animals are forced to endure.

Not only does the gas chamber fail to minimize distress, anxiety and pain, it exacerbates all three. It is also a very crude, imprecise and unreliable manner of killing, with some animals surviving the first attempt at gassing, only to suffer even more during repeated attempts. Animals who are young, old, or have respiratory infections take longer to absorb the poisonous gas and therefore take longer to die, causing their suffering to be even more pronounced, but they are still killed in this manner at shelters across the nation.

According to a past president of the American Animal Hospital Association and former director of the University of Pennsylvania Shelter Medicine program:

There is no progressive sheltering agency of any scope or stature willing to philosophically embrace gas systems for the killing of any species of animals. Sheltering is deliberately, inexorably, and philosophically moving away from mass killing as an acceptable method of dog/cat population control. That there are technical features of one system that distinguish it from other such systems is irrelevant. Profit center analyses, head-to-head demonstrations, ease of use, load capacity—none of these are capable of overcoming the humane and philosophical objection to mechanized death at the core.

In short, they should *never* be used.

Yet in spite of more modern, less stressful and

less painful methods of killing which many states now mandate, the practice of killing dogs and cats in a gas chamber is still legal in others. And while some states have banned its use for dogs and cats, they often allow it for other species of animals which, likewise, suffer greatly when killed in this manner.

Increasing Worker Safety & Lowering Cost

Killing by lethal injection using the procedure outlined in our model law below is not only less painful for the animals than the gas chamber; it is also less dangerous for shelter employees. Not only may terrified animals claw and bite in a desperate bid to escape when being put into the chamber, but carbon monoxide is odorless, tasteless, and highly toxic making it extremely hazardous to human health. Gas leaks in older equipment not only prolong animal suffering, they are hazardous to people as well. Chronic exposure to low levels of carbon monoxide has been documented to cause serious human health problems. Shelter workers have been injured, hospitalized and at least in one case, killed, as a result of the gas chamber.

The gas killing of animals is also more expensive than lethal injection. A national study found that killing by injection was 51% cheaper per animal than the use of the gas chamber. Replacing the use of the gas chamber with lethal injection will not only greatly reduce animal pain and suffering, it will save money while increasing worker safety as well.



MODEL LEGISLATION

THE NO KILL ADVOCACY CENTER'S model legislation banning the gas chamber is written to ensure that the intended goal of the law—to minimize animal suffering during killing—is not undermined when shelters simply replace one cruel method of killing with another. The use of lethal injection by itself does not mean that the process is “humane.” For one, killing a healthy or treatable animal is never humane. Moreover, lethal injection can also be cruel if done improperly. For that reason, the law also bans another painful method of killing: intracardiac injection on conscious animals, in which barbiturates are injected with a syringe directly into the heart, causing them tremendous pain and suffering before death. Our model ordinance bans both, and in their place puts forth a procedure to minimize pain, distress and anxiety.

Sec. 1(a) All animals impounded by a public or private shelter who are killed shall only be killed by lethal intravenous injection of sodium pentobarbital, except as follows:

(1) intraperitoneal injections may be used only under the direction of a licensed veterinarian, and only when intravenous injection is not possible for infant animals, companion animals other than cats and dogs, or in comatose animals with depressed vascular function.

(2) intracardiac injections may be used only when intravenous injection is not possible for animals who are completely unconscious or comatose, and then only by a veterinarian licensed to practice medicine in the state.

(b) No animal shall be allowed to witness any other animal being killed or being tranquilized/sedated for the purpose of being killed or see the bodies of animals which have already been killed.

(c) Animals shall be sedated/tranquilized as necessary to minimize their stress or discomfort, or in the case of vicious animals, to ensure staff safety, except as follows:

(1) neuromuscular blocking agents shall not be used.

(d) Following their injection, animals shall be lowered to the surface on which they are being held and shall not be permitted to drop or otherwise collapse without support.

(e) An animal may not be left unattended between the time procedures to kill the animal are commenced and the time death occurs, nor may the body be disposed of until death is verified.

(f) Verification of death shall be confirmed for each animal in all of the following ways:

(1) by lack of heartbeat, verified by a stethoscope;

(2) by lack of respiration, verified by observation;

(3) by pale, bluish gums and tongue, verified by observation; and

(4) by lack of eye response, verified if lid does not blink when eye is touched and pupil remains dilated when a light is shined on it.

(g) The room in which animals are killed shall be cleaned and regularly disinfected as necessary, but no less than once per day on days the room is used, except as follows:

(1) The area where the procedure is performed shall be cleaned and disinfected between each procedure.

(h) The room in which animals are killed shall have adequate ventilation that prevents the accumulation of odors.

(i) No one other than a licensed veterinarian or a euthanasia technician certified by the state euthanasia certification program shall perform the procedures referenced in this section.

(j) Any person violating any provisions of this article shall be guilty and punishable as a Class A misdemeanor.



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