



May 1, 2014

Dear Members of the House Committee on Local Government,

The Lakeshore Pet Alliance is a coalition of Muskegon County animal shelters, rescues, spay/neuter services, pet care businesses, and animal welfare organizations devoted to addressing pet abuse, homelessness, and overpopulation. We respectfully ask for your support of SB 354, known as "Grant's Bill," to require humane euthanasia in Michigan animal shelters.

Named for a friendly dog who was killed in a Michigan animal control shelter's gas chamber in 2008, "Grant's Bill" would require that Michigan shelters euthanize cats and dogs only via an injection of sodium pentobarbital (referred to as EBI, for euthanasia by injection). When performed properly by trained personnel, EBI is painless to the animal, and begins to take effect within seconds. EBI is accepted by all national veterinary and humane organizations as the most humane method currently available, and the American Veterinary Medical Association no longer supports the use of gas as a routine method of euthanasia in animal shelters.

Gas chambers are ineffective and inefficient, and can't be humanely used for the majority of animals that require euthanasia, including the old, very young, sick, pregnant, or injured. Even under the best of circumstances, animals can only be gassed one at a time, and the 25 or more minutes it can take to end that animal's life can be agonizing. At least one Michigan shelter has indicated that sometimes more than one animal is put into the chamber. And recent studies prove that EBI, including the costs of permitting and acquiring euthanasia drugs, actually *costs less* than using a gas chamber. In this economy, it goes without saying that Michigan shelters should be utilizing the most cost-effective measures available.

Gas chambers also pose a danger to shelter staff. Carbon monoxide is highly toxic and is one of the leading causes of accidental poisoning in the U.S. Shelter workers have been injured and even killed by malfunctioning gas chambers. Lakeshore Pet Alliance members endeavor to provide the safest work environment possible for their staff and volunteers, and the presence of a volatile and toxic gas chamber would simply be unthinkable.

Each of the four Michigan animal control shelters still using gas chambers (Berrien, Branch, Cass, and Van Buren Counties) has an EBI back-up system and/or are trained in EBI. What's more, funds for gas chamber removal and EBI training are readily available to assist them.

Lakeshore Pet Alliance members strive to provide the best of care to homeless pets in Muskegon County. When euthanasia is necessary, the least we can do is to provide them some compassion in their last few moments of life. Indeed, for some animals, that comforting touch at the end may be the only act of kindness and mercy they have ever known.

On behalf of homeless pets in Michigan, we ask that you vote yes for SB 354. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

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Lakeshore Pet Alliance Board Officers

www.LakeshorePetAlliance.org