

## California Won't Mandate Pet Sterilization

**Spay/neuter bill would stiffen penalties for unaltered pets instead.**

*By Brian Hutchins*

Posted: June 20, 2008 2 a.m. EDT

Despite efforts by celebrities like Bob Barker, California's AB 1634 no longer mandates pet sterilization in most cases. California Assembly Bill 1634, which would have essentially mandated cats and dogs in the state to be spayed or neutered, was significantly amended in the state's Senate and no longer mandates pet sterilization.

Instead, the bill stiffens penalties for existing laws associated with nonspayed and unneutered dogs and cats. The amendment also strips the bill of its "California Healthy Pets Act" title and shifts the legislation from the Health and Safety Code to the Food and Agricultural Code.

Specifically, the bill would increase the fines to pet owners for intact cats and dogs impounded by animal control agencies from \$35 to \$50 for the first occurrence. For dogs, that fine would increase from \$50 to \$100 for the second occurrence and require spaying or neutering of the dog, at the owner's expense, on the third occurrence.

Cats would need to be spayed or neutered at the owner's expense following the second occurrence.

In addition, the amended legislation calls for an additional fine for intact animals when the owner is cited for another animal-related complaint, except for excessive noise or barking. The fines, which would be in addition to fines associated with the original complaint, would be \$50 for first occurrence for cats or dogs.

Then, just as with the impound fines, that fine for dogs would be \$100 for the second occurrence and would require spaying or neutering at the owner's expense on the third occurrence.

Cats would need to be spayed or neutered at the owner's expense following the second occurrence.

The fines can be waived if the pet owner can present written proof from a licensed veterinarian that the pet was spayed or neutered within 14 business days of the citation.

The amended legislation has been re-referred to the Senate Committee on Local Government.