

Dear Board of Directors,

As you settle into your important roles, we once again encourage you to consider how your actions, policies and bylaws can make your communities safer, more caring places for people and animals.

We know that you face many challenges and competing priorities, but we clearly heard through our pre-election priorities survey that animal welfare is top of mind for your constituents. The responses we received from over 13,000 British Columbians demonstrate strong public support for:

- Advocating to the province for more pet-friendly housing
- Creating bylaws to keep exotic animals in the wild
- Restricting the private use of fireworks to protect people and animals
- Providing safe, accessible public parks and trails for dogs
- Reducing human/wildlife conflict by prohibiting wildlife feeding and requiring the proper management of wildlife attractants, and
- Humanely controlling rodents by ending the use of all poisons on local government property

As elected representatives and community leaders, you can create meaningful change in your community and across our province, and we urge you to include animal welfare in that change.

You may be interested to note that the City of Port Moody will be bringing a pet-friendly housing resolution to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA), and we have provided information to help the Regional District of Nanaimo bring an exotic animal resolution to their Board and then the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC). We hope you will support these resolutions at the regional level and again at the UBCM Convention in September and consider bringing your own resolutions for animal welfare issues of concern in your community.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions about the BC SPCA's programs and services, or if you would like help enhancing your policies and bylaws – we are always happy to provide support and advice.

We also hope we'll have a chance to meet you at this year's Higher Ground Conference, UBCM Convention and Housing Central Conference.

Thank you,  
Sarah

**Sarah Herring**  
*(she/her)*  
**Government Relations Officer  
and guardian to Oggie**  
**BC SPCA**



# YOU CAN HELP KEEP EXOTIC ANIMALS IN THE WILD

*Exotic animals suffer when they're captured, kept, bred in captivity and sold as pets or entertainment. Removing them from the wild, and releasing them in B.C., damages sensitive ecosystems.*

The BC SPCA's mission is to enhance the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia.

Have questions about how you can improve animal welfare in your community?

Contact us at:  
1-855-622-7722  
[animalbylaws@spca.bc.ca](mailto:animalbylaws@spca.bc.ca)



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## ? WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE?

Exotic animals are wild animals; they haven't been domesticated over thousands of years like cats or dogs. Even generations of captive breeding does not remove their wild instincts and needs. They suffer in captivity and most people don't have the resources or knowledge to fully meet their physical, behavioural and psychological needs.

Removing exotic animals from their natural habitat damages fragile ecosystems and can threaten the survival of wild populations. When they're released in B.C., they can harm our ecosystem and threaten native wildlife. Exotic animals can also transfer serious diseases to humans or other animals, and injure their owners. Learn more about the problem with exotic pets [here](#).

The B.C. *Wildlife Act* only regulates the most dangerous exotic animals as Controlled Alien Species, leaving local governments to deal with other exotic species such as serval cats, kangaroos, ball pythons, parrots and turtles.



## WHAT CAN WE DO?

You can personally choose not to keep exotic pets or support businesses that display or sell them, and educate others about the [exotic pet trade](#). As a local government, you can adopt bylaws that prohibit keeping, breeding, selling and displaying exotic animals and their hybrids.



## WHO ELSE HAS TAKEN ACTION?

**City of Courtenay:**  
Bylaw No. [1897](#)

**City of Fort St. John:**  
Bylaw No. [2527](#)

**Ahousaht First Nation:**  
Bylaw No. [2019-01](#)

Find more BC SPCA-recommended progressive bylaws [here](#).

# YOU CAN PROTECT ANIMALS & PEOPLE FROM FIREWORKS

*Fireworks might seem like harmless entertainment, but they can have far-reaching and long-lasting impacts on animals, people and the environment.*



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## ? WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE?

Exploding fireworks can terrify pets, farm animals and wildlife. Frightened animals are more likely to panic, try to escape or act uncharacteristically. This may mean pets bolting through doors and into traffic, farm animals trampling through fences and breaking limbs, and wildlife flying into buildings or abandoning vulnerable young.

Fireworks can also injure and traumatize people, including those with sensory issues and PTSD, veterans, and survivors and witnesses of gun violence. Structure fires and wildfires can be sparked by fireworks, particularly in dry conditions. Toxic chemicals and debris from fireworks can contaminate air, water and soil, and the debris that's left behind can be eaten by wildlife or domestic animals.

Learn more about the dangers of fireworks [here](#).



## WHAT CAN WE DO?

You can personally refrain from setting off fireworks and encourage your friends and neighbours to do the same. You can also keep your pets safe indoors on nights when fireworks are usually set off.

As a local government, you can adopt bylaws to prohibit the sale of fireworks and control when and where fireworks can be set off. You can also prohibit the use of fireworks or require permits and proper training and certification.



## WHO ELSE HAS TAKEN ACTION?

**City of Vancouver:**

Bylaw No. 12472

**District of Saanich:**

Bylaw No. 8865

**City of Mission:**

Bylaw No. 1706

Find more BC SPCA-recommended progressive bylaws [here](#).



# YOU CAN HELP HUMANELY CONTROL RODENTS

*Even though rodents and other wild animals can pose a health risk or be seen as a nuisance, they don't deserve to be treated inhumanely.*

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## ? WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE?

Each year, millions of rodents and other animals suffer cruel deaths from inhumane pest control methods like glueboards and poison. Rodents trapped on glueboards often die slowly from suffocation, dehydration or exposure. Birds, small animals such as squirrels or chipmunks, and cats can also be trapped and die on glueboards.

Rodent poisons (rodenticides) cause a slow, painful death and can also kill owls, eagles, cats and dogs who eat poisoned rodents or the poison itself.

Thanks to action by thousands of animal welfare supporters and over 20 B.C. municipalities, the provincial government announced a temporary ban on three specific second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides in July of 2021, then a permanent ban set for January 21, 2023. Find out more [here](#).



## WHAT CAN WE DO?

You can personally take steps to rodent-proof your home, car or office, use [AnimalKind](#) standards to humanely control nuisance wildlife and encourage your friends and neighbours to do the same. As a local government, you can adopt policies to ban the use of all types of harmful rodenticides and glueboards on all municipal property and educate your residents on humane methods of rodent control.



## WHO ELSE HAS TAKEN ACTION?

At least 23 B.C. municipalities (listed [here](#)) have passed motions or bylaws to ban all rodenticides (not just second-generation anticoagulants) on all municipal property to focus on prevention, exclusion and humane control.

Find more BC SPCA-recommended progressive bylaws [here](#).



# YOU CAN REDUCE CONFLICTS BETWEEN PEOPLE & WILDLIFE

*The most effective way to solve wildlife conflicts is to prevent them before they happen. Feeding wild animals is harmful and dangerous for us and them.*

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## WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE?

When wild animals eat human food instead of their natural diet, their health suffers. If they come to rely on us for food, it can disrupt their natural movement and migration patterns and lead to the spread of disease. Wild animals who regularly interact with humans lose their healthy sense of fear and can become a nuisance and a public safety concern.

Even if feeding isn't intentional, wildlife can be attracted to our neighbourhoods by improperly stored garbage, compost, bird feeders, dirty barbecues, pet food, and fruit in trees or on the ground. Get more information about the dangers of feeding wildlife [here](#).

The B.C. *Wildlife Act* only prohibits the feeding of dangerous wildlife such as bears, cougars, coyotes or wolves, leaving local governments to regulate the feeding and management of attractants for other wildlife species.



## WHAT CAN WE DO?

You can personally refrain from feeding wild animals, make sure you properly manage your garbage, compost, gardens and barbecues and encourage your friends and neighbours to do the same.

As a local government, you can adopt bylaws that prohibit intentional feeding and require proper storage and management of attractants.



## WHO ELSE HAS TAKEN ACTION?

<b>District of Tumbler Ridge:</b> Bylaw No. <a href="#">692</a>	<b>City of Vancouver:</b> Bylaw No. <a href="#">13321</a>	<b>City of Coquitlam:</b> Bylaw No. <a href="#">4284</a>
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Find more BC SPCA-recommended progressive bylaws [here](#).





# YOU CAN ADVOCATE FOR PET-FRIENDLY HOUSING

*British Columbia is in a housing crisis, and finding a home that allows pets is even more difficult. Vulnerable people that need a pet's companionship the most often have the hardest time.*

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## WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE?

Most pet owners consider their animals an important part of their family, and research has proven that pets improve our physical, mental and emotional health and well-being. However, many families have to make the heartbreaking choice between keeping their pets and finding a place to live. Approximately 25% of all cats and dogs surrendered to the BC SPCA (totaling more than 11,000 animals and families over the past eight years) are victims of a lack of pet-friendly housing.

Already vulnerable populations, including those earning low incomes, young people, seniors and women are disproportionately impacted by the lack of pet-friendly housing across the province - and these are the very people who often rely on the love and support of their pets the most.



## WHAT CAN WE DO?

Although local governments are not primarily responsible for housing, you can call on the provincial government to increase the availability and affordability of pet-friendly housing in your community and across British Columbia. You can also work with MLAs, housing developers, non-profit housing providers and landlords in your community to advocate for more pet-friendly housing and find creative solutions that protect families with pets as well as landlords and stratas.



## WHO ELSE HAS TAKEN ACTION?

Ontario's *Residential Tenancies Act* does not allow landlords to include "no pet" clauses in rental agreements or to charge additional pet deposits on top of regular damage deposits. In 2020, the City of Vancouver passed a *motion* to ask the province to prohibit "no pet" clauses in rental contracts in B.C.



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# YOU CAN PROVIDE PUBLIC SPACES FOR DOGS

*Safe, accessible dog-friendly spaces, especially in higher density neighbourhoods, can be important places for dogs and people to exercise and socialize outdoors.*

## ? WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE?

Increasing rates of pet ownership and increasing density in our neighbourhoods mean there is less private space for dogs (like personal backyards). This has created a growing demand for safe, accessible, dog-friendly public spaces. Research has shown that pets contribute to their owner's mental, physical and emotional health, so making communities more welcoming for dogs is also an investment in people's health and well-being.

Dog-friendly public spaces can be a great place for well-socialized dogs and their owners to exercise, enjoy the outdoors and socialize with other dogs and people. Designated off-leash areas can reduce conflicts with other park users, reduce unsanctioned off-leash activity in more sensitive areas and protect wildlife.



## WHAT CAN WE DO?

You can talk to your friends, neighbours and dog owners in your community to find out what spaces they use and value, and what else might be needed.

As a local government, you can analyze access to and distribution of safe, accessible dog-friendly spaces throughout your community and allocate land and financing to develop more spaces where needed.



## WHO ELSE HAS TAKEN ACTION?

The City of Vancouver adopted its [People, Parks and Dogs: A Strategy for Sharing Vancouver's Parks](#) in 2017.

The District of Saanich is currently developing a [People, Pets and Parks](#) strategy.