

Committee Members,

My name is Roland Halpern, and I am the executive director of Colorado Voters for Animals.

I hope to be here in person to testify but I have a webinar to host with 72 attendees later this afternoon making it all but impossible to re-schedule.

I am here on behalf of Colorado Voters for Animals to urge you to vote yes on HB26-1183.

In the most recent PACFA Sunset Review, DORA noted: (quote) “Colorado was one of the first states to adopt a statewide program to protect pets and the humans who purchase or adopt them. In fact, Colorado has one of the most comprehensive pet animal facility regulations in the country.”

That report concluded with a recommendation to continue the PACFA program.

Over the years studies have recognized PACFA. One study published in 2019 in the American Journal of Veterinary Medicine<sup>1</sup> noted: “Since the implementation of PACFA’s licensing, inspection, and statewide reporting system, Colorado has experienced substantial improvements in animal shelter outcomes—including more than a 50–60% decline in euthanasia rates and significant increases in live-release rates for dogs and cats between 2000 and 2015.”

Other states including Iowa<sup>2</sup> and Louisiana<sup>3</sup> have considered PACFA’s success when designing their own animal welfare laws, and in collaborating with our colleagues from other states they often inquire about PACFA when working to improve their own state’s animal welfare laws.

PACFA establishes enforceable minimum standards plus accountability. Without it, Colorado would rely on a patchwork of local rules and voluntary practices, with far less consistency and fewer tools to prevent neglect before it becomes a cruelty case. And the data collected by PACFA provides leverage to improve animal welfare outcomes statewide on an ongoing basis.

Again, I would ask for your yes vote.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> *Temporal trends in intake and outcome data for animal shelter and rescue facilities in Colorado from 2000 through 2015.*

<sup>2</sup> *The Colorado Pet Animal Care and Facilities Act (PACFA) Comparison with Iowa’s Animal Welfare Act (IWA)*

<sup>3</sup> *2021 - The State of Louisiana’s Role in Animal Welfare and Control Activities*

**Written Testimony of Animal Counsel**  
**HB26-1183**  
**Sunset Pet Animal Care & Facilities Act**  
**House Agriculture, Water, and Natural Resources Committee**  
**April 9, 2026**

Chair McCormick and Members of the Committee:

Animal Counsel is delighted to have the opportunity to provide written testimony to the Committee for their consideration. As a 501(c)(3) corporation specialized in animal welfare efforts and outcomes, we hope the Committee will see value in our proposals.

Overall, we support PACFA and agree the program should continue. As you are aware, PACFA was established in 1994 to protect the health, safety, and welfare of animals in pet care facilities in Colorado, and this program has helped Colorado become a leader in pet protection. We agree that protecting in-state pets is important and would like Colorado to remain an animal welfare leader. However, as part of the sunset review process, the Committee is responsible for comparing the original intent of PACFA to the program's current state and determining whether more or less governmental oversight is required. We believe that PACFA has strayed from its original purpose and has made it increasingly difficult for small facilities to operate. Our testimony is intended to warn this Committee that PACFA may be headed in the wrong direction, and that additional oversight may be required, especially when it comes to the effects PACFA regulations have on smaller facilities.

PACFA's regulations define several types of facilities, including animal rescues, shelters, breeders, boarders, groomers, and more. The regulations also differentiate foster homes and, most recently, foster providers. However, the definition of "facility" is broad enough that it could encompass foster homes, as well as "all buildings...at a single location in which an animal is kept, handled, or transported for the purpose of...transferring animals." While this definition is not new, its current interpretation and enforcement seem to have expanded, and the distinction between licensed facilities and

private living spaces is becoming less clear. This is especially apparent by the several “common area” additions to regulatory requirements previously intended only for enclosures.

In practice, this has resulted in situations where a private residence on the same property as a rescue or shelter is essentially treated as a business and subject to PACFA’s regulatory requirements. While the intention may be to promote animal welfare, in reality, it creates significant financial and compliance burdens for small operations, potentially requiring costly modifications to residential spaces. This discourages well-intentioned operators from continuing their work and may ultimately result in fewer animals being cared for. The same is true of several other regulatory changes and proposals as well. For example, the increased license application fees are likely to have a disproportionate effect on smaller facilities.

Animal Counsel would also like to note an area of definitional concern: the ambiguity in veterinarian requirements for those affected under the proposed regulations. Specifically, Section 15.3 provides that timely care for any sick or injured animal must occur “under the direction of the facility’s veterinarian.” Proceeding Section 15.1 goes into the specifics for what level of veterinary access groups like shelters, rescues, and pet grooming and training facilities should have, but these individual explanations do not cover all groups encompassed under “facility” as defined in Section 1.12. “Facility” includes shelters, commercial breeders and groomers, and pet animal trainers, but it also seemingly includes individual citizens selling the offspring of their family pet. It would include buildings where a pet is taken out of its residential home and placed in another, such as for dogsitting practices. Section 15.1 does not provide any guidance on how these categories of persons contained under “facilities” are meant to interact with the veterinarian requirement in Section 15.3. As currently written, it is unclear whether these categories of persons would be included under Section 15.3’s requirements or not. We urge the Committee to make clear the status of these groups as it relates to veterinary retention and care and, if they are to be included, provide equitable requirements for these categories.

To reiterate, we support PACFA, but several recent changes and proposals have been alarming. PACFA appears to be drifting from its welfare-focused framework toward a compliance-heavy regime that unintentionally burdens those whose goals align with PACFA's. As part of the sunset review process, we ask this Committee to pay closer attention to the disproportionate effect PACFA has on small facilities, and the unintended consequences that its implementation is having on animal welfare overall. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Eric Nicholson  
Shelby White

