

October 28, 2025

Dear Commission Streamlining Task Force,

As a former chair of the Commission of Animal Control & Welfare, I urge you to keep this vital Commission for our city. The Commission serves an essential role as a body the Board of Supervisors and other city organizations rely on to vet ordinances, resolutions, state bills, and many other **issues not within the purview of Animal Care & Control**, and as a public forum that hosts passionate debates involving **countless San Franciscans** and bringing in-depth education via expert presenters/speakers to our city.

Significantly, because Commissioners receive zero compensation, have zero budget, and do not have any dedicated administrators, the city receives these benefits for a cost nowhere near their true cost.

As Chair, I experienced how much our Board relied on our Commission to do the hard work of researching, analyzing, and making recommendations on issues brought to our attention by both by the public - such as a proposed ordinance to change ACC's euthanasia policy that would have had significant consequences on ACC's operations - and by leading organizations in the field - such as the Humane Society of the United States and Direct Action Everywhere.

Significantly, none of these issues could have been addressed by ACC.

ACC could not have ethically decided the issue of its euthanasia policy because of its obvious conflict of interest. Nor could it have addressed the issues brought to our attention by HSUS and DXE as they addressed the purchase and consumption of animal products by San Franciscans - an issue clearly not within the purview of ACC, but within the scope of the Commission.

Our duty could only be fulfilled by hosting thorough debate, seeking out expertise, and offering in-depth public presentations that meant our public meetings alone would run for several hours. Supervisors, including former Supervisors Safai and Haney, repeatedly referred the public to our Commission and relied on us to vet resolutions that they - based on our recommendation - went on to sponsor and that the Board passed.

Eliminating the Commission will transfer these countless hours of work to city personnel and cost the city much more than the reported estimated cost of the Commission. Each commissioner volunteers several hours a week, at a minimum, to be able to serve their duties, including performing administrative functions and spending money out of their own pockets that goes without reimbursement. Eliminating the Commission will mean that the tasks of interfacing with the public and doing the research required to advise on the issues the Commission currently addresses will go to the Supervisors' offices, ACC personnel, and other departments. ***It is astonishing that your report does not include an estimate of the cost of eliminating the Commission.***

Interfacing with the public and gathering public opinion is no small task. It's disappointing that your report implies that the Commission's public is only a handful of residents. Even in my two terms as Commissioner, I chaired/witnessed meetings attended by dozens and even over a hundred members of the public. ***Speaking to any current or former Commissioner would have informed you of this fact, and it's concerning that you spoke only with ACC personnel and no one who has actually served on the Commission. How do you make a recommendation based on only speaking with the main body the Commission receives public complaints / comments about?*** Your minimal research underscores your lack of understanding of how much work the Commission performs.

Further, the Commission is an invaluable educational forum. We have hosted dozens of organizations - both local and national - that are experts in the fields of animal welfare and animal rights and the intersections of animal issues with public health and safety. Again, commissioners work countless hours for free to bring experts - who also show up for free - to the community. These have included the following leaders in the field:

- Wildcare
- SF Dog
- PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals)
- Direct Action Everywhere
- Project Coyote
- Palomacy
- Canine Grooming Academy

- Vet SOS
- NorCal Bats
- Full Belly Bus

Community institutions, such as the University of San Francisco and the San Francisco SPCA, and numerous Supervisors that include Supervisor Chan, have realized the importance of our Commission and have shown up to participate in our meetings. If they can understand the relevance of our Commission, surely you can as well.

The Commission is essential in keeping San Francisco at the forefront of progress. Our work has helped ban the sale of fur in our city, and we are currently working to ban the use of glue traps in our city - both cruel practices that cause immeasurable pain to millions of animals each year. ***Significantly, these are just two examples of laws that would not be in the purview of ACC to work on.*** Neither would it have been within ACC's scope to work on passing the resolutions supporting state Proposition 12 and a proposed state "right to rescue" act, or recommending the city State Legislation Committee endorse State Assembly bills promoting plant-based food in schools and plant-based agriculture as part of California's leadership on climate action. These are just a few examples of the Commission's leadership that I was personally involved in. ***The decades of work that preceded my terms, and that will hopefully continue, encompassed so much more - including Commissioners showing up, despite receiving threats of bodily injury and with police presence, to perform their duties.***

The Commission's work far exceeds the scope stated in your report. If the Commission is eliminated, who will do the work of making sure our city continues to act as the compassionate leader it is?

Regards,

Nina Irani
Former Chair, Commission of Animal Control & Welfare
District 1