

From: [REDACTED]
To: [commissionstreamlining](#)
Subject: Keep the Animal Control and Welfare Commission
Date: Friday, October 31, 2025 6:41:48 AM

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October 31, 2025

Dear Commission Streamlining Task Force:

I am writing to you as a former Commissioner of the Animal Control and Welfare Commission (ACWC), a position I held for ten years from April 2015 to April 2025. During that time, I served as the Commission Secretary, Vice Chair, and as an animal welfare advisor on the Joint Zoo Committee (JZC).

Importance of ACWC Oversight

Specifically, I am writing to respond to the Commission Streamlining Task Force, which recently released a document of recommendations, including the elimination of the Commission of Animal Control and Welfare. I ask that you reconsider this recommendation, as I believe the Animal Control and Welfare Commission provides a valuable service to San Francisco's residents (humans and animals) by advocating in the complex space where public safety and animal welfare intersect.

In contrast to the report, I believe the ACWC has not outlived its purpose, and its elimination removes necessary oversight guardrails. Furthermore, I know the Task Force got some things wrong in its assessment, and I would like to set the record straight. I will use my own experience as a Commissioner on the Animal Welfare Commission and as an Animal Welfare Advisor on the Joint Zoo Committee, along with the outcomes they produced, as examples of successful oversight.

ACWC and JZC Oversight

On page 63 of the Task Force report, it states, "The Commission's most noteworthy recent accomplishment is cited as its involvement with the Joint Zoo Committee's 2024 Animal Welfare Advisors' Report; though the Commission voted in support of this report, it did not have a role in preparing it."

This assertion is false. As one of the two animal welfare advisors on the JZC, I prepared the report. I did so by soliciting input from animal welfare advocates and current and former Zoo staff who had documented concerns, and verified its accuracy with Zoo union leaders. I also researched where the Zoo was in violation of the Memorandum of Understanding with

the City of San Francisco and how the City could respond.

At the ACWC meeting in October of 2023, I presented a draft report to fellow commissioners for approval, and in December of 2023, I presented the report at the JZC meeting. The report was balanced, offering an accurate documentation of animal welfare and safety concerns, the Zoo's accomplishments, and a series of recommendations. The Board of Supervisors unanimously voted in support of one of the recommendations—a comprehensive audit of the SF Zoo.

Outcome

Continued pressure from ACWC, the media, zoo donors, and animal welfare advocates highlighted problems with the Zoo's executive leadership, its board of directors, and the Zoo's complete lack of transparency.

Without this level of oversight, the public-private partnership failings between the SF Zoo and the City would have remained unaddressed. So yes, as a Commissioner on the ACWC and an Advisor on the JZC, I did prepare the report, but not without exhaustive research and time, soliciting and verifying accurate information from key stakeholders, and, lastly, analyzing the authority each department had to drive change. This is standard practice for the ACWC when addressing any issue. In the end, the report was the result of an effort led by the ACWC and prepared by the ACWC.

The ACWC is effective in executing on its mission. As an independent body, it is a safe space for the public to share concerns and learn. For SF Zoo current and former staff, the ACWC was the only place they could be heard without fear of retaliation. Please reconsider supporting the Animal Control and Welfare Commission and including one of its commissioners on the Joint Zoo Committee to serve as an animal welfare advisor. The animals and humans will benefit from the independent oversight provided by this commission.

Sincerely,

Jane Tobin

Haight Ashbury Neighborhood/District 5