

From: [REDACTED]
To: [commissionstreamlining](#)
Subject: Keep San Francisco's Animal Welfare Commission Intact—A Proven, Public-Facing Safeguard for Animals and People
Date: Tuesday, November 4, 2025 9:47:20 AM

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Dear Commission Streamlining Task Force,

I'm writing in strong support of San Francisco's Animal Control & Welfare Commission (ACWC) and to urge you to preserve it as a distinct, public-facing body. I've worked with the Commission and its members since 2008 on improving conditions for animals at the San Francisco Zoo and on citywide animal welfare and public safety issues. Time and again, the ACWC has proven indispensable: it is one of the very few municipal commissions in the country dedicated specifically to animal welfare, and in a city named for the patron saint of animals, its role is both practical and profoundly aligned with our civic identity.

What the ACWC uniquely provides is an independent, transparent forum where experts, advocates, and city leaders can surface problems early, weigh humane and science-based solutions, and build public trust. That work protects animals and people alike. A few examples of the Commission's meaningful impact include:

- **Independent oversight and public accountability.** The ACWC has held hearings and issued recommendations on conditions at the San Francisco Zoo, helping elevate worker and public safety concerns, facility deficiencies, and ethical standards for animal care.
- **Humane wildlife and public safety policy.** The Commission has advanced coexistence strategies for urban wildlife (e.g., coyotes and raccoons), emphasizing prevention, education, and non-lethal management that improve neighborhood safety and reduce conflict.
- **Disaster planning that keeps families whole.** By championing pet-inclusive emergency planning and sheltering protocols, the ACWC has helped ensure residents aren't forced to choose between personal safety and their animals during fires, storms, and other emergencies.
- **Companion-animal protections and access to care.** The Commission has supported policies that expand spay/neuter access, improve shelter outcomes, and strengthen anti-cruelty and consumer protections—especially for low-income and vulnerable communities.
- **Ethical, modern standards citywide.** Through regular advice to the Board of Supervisors and City departments, the ACWC has kept San Francisco at the forefront of humane, evidence-based practices that reflect our values.

Beyond outcomes, the Commission's public meetings, published recommendations, and open deliberations are themselves a critical service. They give residents a place to be heard, shine

light on complex issues, and create accountability that internal processes alone cannot provide. Folding the ACWC into a larger body or eliminating it would inevitably reduce transparency and expertise at the very moment when climate change, urban density, and evolving public values demand more—not less—focused attention on animal welfare and public safety.

I respectfully ask the Task Force to:

1. **Maintain the ACWC as an independent, public-facing Commission;**
2. **Affirm its advisory authority across animal welfare and public safety issues; and**
3. **Ensure it has the resources and staffing needed to do this work well.**

For nearly two decades, I've seen the difference the ACWC makes: real problems surfaced sooner, better solutions crafted in the open, and a city that lives closer to its ideals. San Francisco should not diminish this capacity—we should build on it.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our city.

Sincerely,

Justin Barker

San Francisco resident & longtime collaborator with the ACWC

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