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July 19, 2011

The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
County of Los Angeles  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

**ADOPTED**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

21 July 19, 2011

*Sachi A. Hamai*  
SACHI A. HAMAI  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Supervisors:

**AMENDMENTS TO LOS ANGELES COUNTY CODE,  
TITLE 10 - ANIMALS**

**SUBJECT**

Approval of the recommended amendments to Title 10 of the Los Angeles County Code will enhance public safety related to potentially dangerous or vicious dogs. This ordinance adds an administrative hearing option for deciding potentially dangerous or vicious dog cases; expands the definition of severe injury; and expands the definition of vicious dog.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:**

1. Approve the Ordinance amending Title 10 - ANIMALS of the Los Angeles County Code to add, delete, and modify the relevant sections related to potentially dangerous and vicious dogs; and
2. Introduce, waive reading, and adopt the Ordinance.

**PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The proposed changes add an administrative hearing option to determine whether a dog is potentially dangerous or vicious. Currently, the Department must pursue a limited civil action in Superior Court to have a dog declared potentially dangerous or vicious. By adding an administrative hearing option to decide these cases, the Department will save time and money while maintaining its ability to seek restrictions on the dog's owner or custodian to ensure public safety. The Department currently uses administrative hearings when animals are seized due to animal neglect or abuse

concerns, and can apply the same process to potentially dangerous and vicious dog cases.

The definition of severe injury is revised to include a serious injury other than a bite, laceration, or fracture. An example would be a person that suffers a heart attack as a result of a dog attack.

The definition of vicious dog is revised in the attached Ordinance to allow the hearing officer to consider prior attacks that occurred outside the Department's jurisdiction. This would address the problem of a dog determined to be dangerous in another jurisdiction that is moved to our jurisdiction and attacked again.

### **Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals**

Approval of the recommended actions is consistent with the County's Strategic Plan Goals in the areas of Operational Effectiveness (Goal 1), Community and Municipal Services (Goal 3) and Public Safety (Goal 5).

### **FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING**

The Department will see a reduction in legal costs since counsel is not required to prepare for or be present at administrative hearings.

### **FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

The proposed amendments will allow the Department to better regulate and enforce the potentially dangerous and vicious dog provisions of the Ordinance. It is recommended that your Board approve the proposed amendments to the Ordinance:

Amend the definition of vicious dog in Los Angeles County Code §10.37.030 C to include prior determinations that a dog is a dangerous or vicious dog in another jurisdiction.

Amend the definition of severe injury in Los Angeles County Code §10.37.040 to include physical harm that results in a serious illness or injury.

Amend Los Angeles County Code §10.37.110 to include an administrative hearing option to decide potentially dangerous or vicious dog cases.

Amend Los Angeles County Code §10.37.120 to differentiate the appeal process of a court hearing from judicial review of an administrative hearing.

Amend Los Angeles County Code §10.37.121 to add the notice of decision and judicial review of an administrative decision.

Amend Los Angeles County Code §10.37.130 to specify requirements for dog obedience courses ordered by the hearing officer or judicial officer and to clarify that fines may be imposed by a judicial officer.

Amend Los Angeles County Code §10.37.140 to describe the authority of judicial officers and hearing officers to impose restrictions on owners.

Amend Los Angeles County Code §10.37.150 to provide for follow-up hearing dates to confirm compliance with conditions, and consequences of violations of conditions imposed by administrative hearing officers or judicial officers.

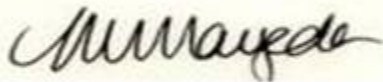
**IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)**

The recommended action will enhance the Department's ability to protect public safety regarding potentially dangerous and vicious dogs. The administrative hearing process is an efficient and cost effective means of obtaining a determination of whether a dog is potentially dangerous or vicious.

**CONCLUSION**

Approval of the recommended changes to Title 10 of the County Code will enhance public safety by providing an administrative hearing option to hear potentially dangerous and vicious dog cases; expand the definition of severe injury; and expand the definition of vicious dog. Please return one adopted copy of this letter to the Department of Animal Care and Control.

Respectfully submitted,



MARCIA MAYEDA

Director

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Enclosures

c: Chief Executive Office  
County Counsel  
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors