



May 5, 2026

San Bernardino County District Attorney
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors
California State Representatives

RE: Urgent Community Demand for Stronger Enforcement and Penalties for Animal Abandonment and Cruelty

To Whom It May Concern,

We, the undersigned members of this community, are writing to demand immediate action, accountability, and legal reform in response to the ongoing crisis of animal abandonment and cruelty in our region.

Our mountain communities, particularly on and around Highway 38, are being overwhelmed by the number of dogs being dumped. What should be a place of safety, nature, and neighborhood has become a known corridor for abandonment.

These animals are being left confused, injured, starving, and often in life-threatening conditions. But the impact does not stop with them.

Dumped dogs do not just suffer; they create a serious public health risk. Unvaccinated and unmonitored, they can spread diseases such as rabies, parvovirus, distemper, and leptospirosis between wildlife, pets, and people, putting our entire community at risk.

This crisis is affecting our community in real and measurable ways:



Mountain Community Animal Protection Program



Residents are the ones finding these dogs on the side of the road, in the woods, and in extreme weather conditions. They are stopping traffic to prevent accidents, using their own resources to provide food, medical care, and temporary shelter, and carrying the emotional burden of witnessing suffering firsthand.

Families, volunteers, and local rescues are stretched beyond capacity. Public safety is at risk as loose, frightened animals run into roadways. Compassion fatigue is real and growing. This is not sustainable or acceptable.

What This Looks Like in Real Life

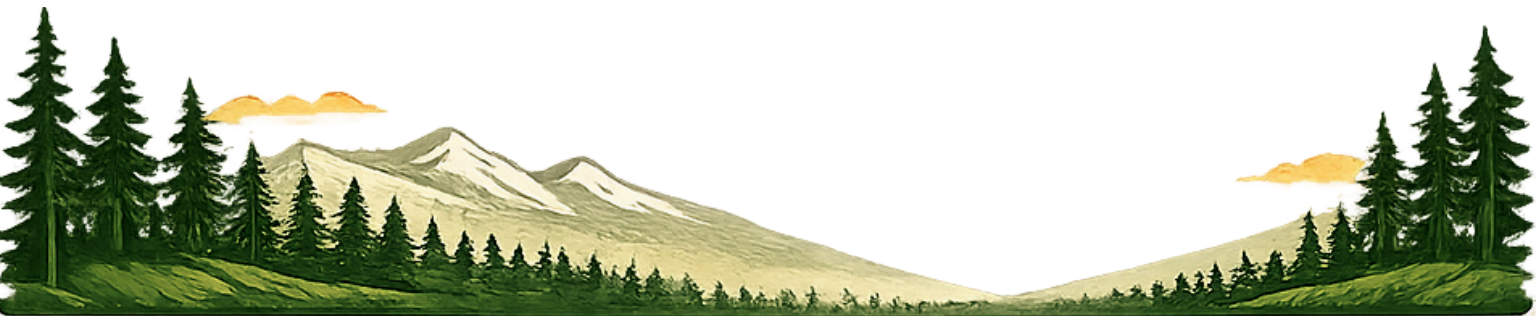
This is not hypothetical. This is happening here.

Myia's Story

For six days, Myia and another dog were seen running along and through traffic on Highway 38; dodging cars, sleeping on residents' porches, and wandering into public spaces in search of safety. One of the dogs was killed. On the sixth day, Myia was finally trapped by local residents. Community members stepped in, paid over \$800 for her veterinary care, and ensured she was adopted locally.

Skyler, Moses, Daisy, and Honey

Four dogs were dumped in a local picnic area along Highway 38 and spent three days running through the community, chasing residents and searching for food. Neighbors attempted to help by throwing food to them while waiting for assistance. When traps were finally set by animal control, they were left unattended overnight in the wilderness. Residents remained with the trapped dogs for over five hours in the heat, without food or water, waiting for animal





control to return. Ultimately, the community took all four dogs in, paid for their veterinary care, and placed them into homes themselves.

These are not isolated incidents. They are part of a growing pattern. Our community is stepping in where systems are falling short, but we are out of space, out of resources, and reaching a breaking point.

Compassion should not be the only safety net these animals have.

Under current California law, willful animal abandonment is classified as a misdemeanor under Penal Code § 597s. This means individuals who knowingly abandon animals—often condemning them to prolonged suffering or death—face penalties that fail to reflect the severity of the act.

We are calling for the following actions:

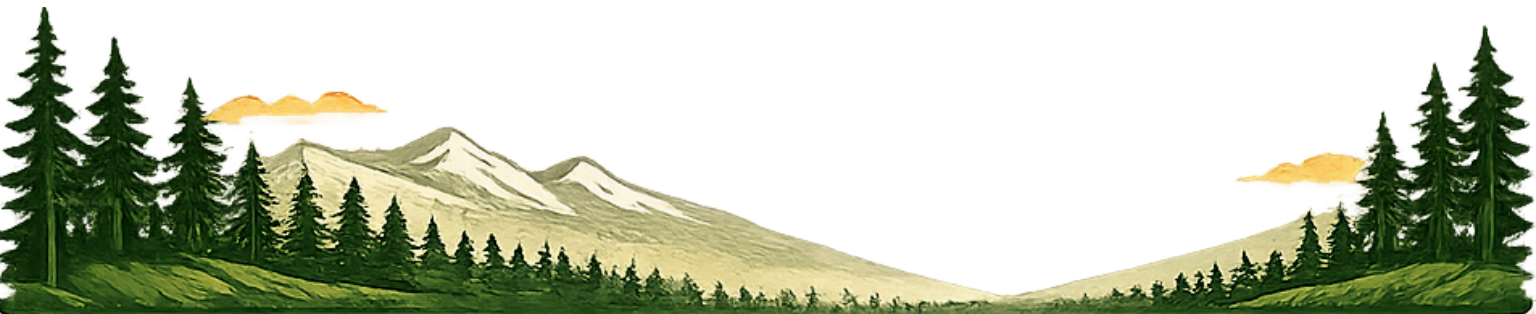
1. Increased Enforcement of Existing Laws

We urge the District Attorney's Office to prioritize and aggressively prosecute animal abandonment and cruelty cases using all applicable statutes, including Penal Code § 597 where appropriate.

2. Stronger Penalties for Animal Abandonment

We request increased fines, mandatory restitution for rescue, veterinary care, and sheltering costs, and enhanced penalties for repeat offenders.

3. Elevation of Animal Abandonment to a Felony in Aggravated Cases



Mountain Community Animal Protection Program



We call for legislative reform to classify animal abandonment as a felony when it involves:

- Remote or high-risk dumping locations, including mountain and rural areas such as Highway 38
- Resulting injury, suffering, or death
- Repeat or intentional patterns of abandonment

4. Enforcement of Existing Animal Welfare Laws, Including AB 519

We request full enforcement of laws regulating the sourcing and sale of animals in order to reduce the cycle that leads to abandonment.

5. Increased Transparency and Community Awareness

We ask for greater public visibility into animal cruelty cases and their outcomes to ensure accountability and build public trust.

This issue is visible. It is ongoing. And it is overwhelming our community.

We are asking you to recognize the urgency of this crisis not only for the animals, but for the people who are being left to respond in the absence of adequate systems, resources, and consequences.

We respectfully request a formal meeting or placement on a public agenda to discuss these concerns and potential solutions. The time for stronger action is now.

Sincerely,

