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Position Statement Regarding Proposed Amendment to H. 219
Vermont Spay Neuter Incentive Program
Dr. David Hyde, Ryegate Veterinary Hospital
VVMA Government Relations Committee Chair

Thank you for your work on H. 219, the bill regarding the administration of the Vermont Spay Neuter Incentive Program. We have reviewed the proposed amendment to the bill, and we would like to voice our strong opposition to it.

H. 219 does not require a change in the current administrator. All the bill does is allow the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to operate the program itself in the event a private contractor is unavailable instead of having the suspend program operation. This bill is responsible legislation for the continuation of an important program that low income Vermonters depend on.

We feel that the proposed amendment would restrict DCF and make them responsible for proving any or all of the outlined criteria in the event a contract was not renewed. This amendment makes future litigation easier and more likely, and would put an even greater burden on DCF in the oversight of the program.

Vermont's veterinarians are integral to this program, and we are committed to continuing to improve VSNIP, address the problems of unwanted pets, and making responsible pet ownership possible for low-income Vermonters. H. 219 is a responsible and necessary change to the statutes, and the proposed amendment could significantly damage the long-term future success of the program. We hope the Senate Government Operations Committee will report it out favorably unchanged.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Dr. David Hyde, Chair
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