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Pennsylvania Waives Spay/Neuter Requirement for Adoptions, Conserves PPE for Human Healthcare Professionals

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture announced today that in an effort to conserve personal protective equipment (PPE) for human healthcare workers, the Pennsylvania Dog Law that requires shelters and rescues to spay/neuter dogs and cats prior to adoption would be waived for pets adopted during active COVID-19 mitigation efforts in Pennsylvania.

“This waiver is not something we take lightly; but it’s a matter of weighing the costs,” said Agriculture Secretary Redding. “Waiving the requirement to spay or neuter prior to adoption allows us to conserve critical PPE supplies and also limit the risk of exposure for veterinarians.”

The [waiver](#) comes with a contingency: shelters must keep a list of adopters to follow up with post-pandemic and provide a copy of all contracts to the Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement. Once the pandemic is in the past, shelters would be required to follow up on all pets adopted during COVID-19 mitigation. Adoptive pet owners will have up to 120 days from the time of adoption – timeframe to be re-evaluated as necessary – to have the procedure completed and come into compliance.

With approval from the department, shelters and rescues can continue adopting pets out to Pennsylvanians even during Stay at Home orders. This is essential in order to ensure that shelters are not overly full of animals with short staff numbers. Shelters and rescues continuing to operate and adopt pets are advised to follow [guidance for virtual, limited contact adoptions](#) from the Humane Society of the United States. Rescues and shelters should also follow guidance issued from the department to [protect their workforce and continue operations](#).

“The Humane Society of the United States has been monitoring state laws that impact the ability for shelters and rescues to adjust to COVID-19 and provide services to pet and their families,” said Kristen Tullo, Pennsylvania State Director for The Humane Society of the United States. “We thank the Department of Agriculture for extending the timeframe to comply with spay/neuter laws to maximize social distancing and decrease

the risks to animal shelter and veterinary staff, while reducing the use of PPE in non-essential procedures.”

Before adopting, Pennsylvanians should consider if they're able to provide for all the pets' needs during COVID-19 mitigation and follow the department's [Guidance to Pet Owners](#).

For information as it relates to agriculture during COVID-19 mitigation in Pennsylvania visit agriculture.pa.gov/COVID. For the most accurate, timely information related to Health in Pennsylvania, visit on.pa.gov/coronavirus.