

**2025 House Bill No. 1538**  
**Testimony before the House Agriculture Committee**  
**Presented by Cameo Skager, Communications Director**  
**Central Dakota Humane Society**  
**January 31, 2025**

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

My name is Cameo Skager. I am the communications director for Central Dakota Humane Society and have been involved with CDHS for 30 years. I am here to testify in support of House Bill 1538.

CDHS is an animal rescue, shelter, and adoption center located north of Mandan. We are a private, non-profit that raises funds through our community of donors and supporters, fundraising events, adoption fees, gifts from local businesses, and a few foundation grants.

In 2025 we will be celebrating 65 years of rescuing and rehoming animals in North Dakota. We have been in our shelter building for the past 30 years. It's fair to say we've seen a lot and know a lot about saving animals and what it takes to serve the people and the pets in our community.

CDHS houses and cares for approximately 125 animals every day. Last year, we provided 170,000 meals to dogs and cats through our Buddy's Bowl Program that helps to feed pets in need in our community. Helping people care for their pets keeps those animals out of the shelter/rescue/impound system.

Another program that we have been funding since 1998 is our Spay/Neuter Assistance Program (SNAP). We currently fund 100 - \$50 SNAP coupons each month. These coupons are offered to pet owners in the central North Dakota region as an incentive for them to get their pets spayed and neutered. Our \$60,000 annual budget for this program comes from our amazing donors and our fundraising events.

We work with 25 vets in the Bismarck-Mandan and central North Dakota area from Dickinson to Jamestown. People call us when they have an appointment to alter their pet, and we mail them a coupon. They submit the coupon to their vet, who returns it to us for reimbursement.

CDHS receives multiple phone calls and messages every day asking us to take in stray, abandoned, and injured animals. We are always at full capacity, as is every rescue and shelter throughout North Dakota. Even though there are many animal shelters and rescues in our state, it seems the problem of pet overpopulation continues. This problem comes from primarily two things – pets not being spayed and neutered and owners who allow their unaltered pets to roam, or who kick them out when they no longer want them.

There are sophisticated formulas to calculate how many cats or dogs are born from one unaltered pet. Though we have not done a complete calculation, CDHS is confident in saying that we have stopped the reproductive cycle of tens of thousands of pets in North Dakota through our SNAP incentive coupons over the past 27 years.

We do know other nonprofit animal groups across the state are also working hard to quell the numbers of homeless pets through spay/neuter programs – offering incentive coupons, providing trap-neuter-return programs, funding spays/neuters for adopted impound animals, and offering low-cost spay/neuter services. All these nonprofits do what they can but are stretched to their limits, physically and monetarily. We are all working to prevent the suffering, disease, injury, and death of the animals that are turned out and cast off.

We encourage consideration of this funding to help shelters, rescues, veterinarians, and towns across North Dakota work to ensure that the majority of pet dogs and cats are spayed or neutered and not procreating. We cannot rescue and adopt our way out of pet overpopulation. The only way out is spaying and neutering. It's raining cats and dogs, and we need to stop the downpour.

We urge a "do pass" on House Bill 1538.

This concludes my testimony. I'd be happy to answer any questions that you may have.