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January 10, 2003

Mayor Willie L. Brown Jr. and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Ladies and gentlemen,

The National Animal Interest Alliance is a coalition of animal owners and organizations dedicated to animal welfare, responsible animal ownership, and maintaining the rights of owners to keep and enjoy pets and livestock. NAIA strongly opposes the concept of legal guardianship for pets. We have reviewed File Number 021645, the Pet Guardian Proposal pending before the San Francisco City Council and offer these reasons for urging its defeat.

Adding 'guardian' to existing animal laws is the first step in changing the legal status of pets from personal property to wards of the state, a goal of animal rights activists. Thus the guardian proposal has the potential to

- ✧ clog the courts with frivolous cases brought by animal rights extremists on behalf of dogs, cats and other pets.
- ✧ harm animals by creating confusion about who is responsible for their care.
- ✧ lead to increasingly restrictive animal care laws and regulations.
- ✧ limit the right of individuals to buy and sell pets.

The campaign to end pet ownership is contrary to everything we know about American society. Most pet owners consider their pets part of the family, but they also know that legal ownership of their animals not only makes them responsible for pet care, it also protects pets from confiscation without cause and preserves the rights of owners to feed, house, train, care for and interact with their pets in ways that strengthen the human-animal bond.

Adding 'guardian' to current law is unnecessary to achieve a society in which animals are held in high regard and protected from cruelty; thousands of San Franciscans who understand that they legally own their pets are already doing the job through the exercise of responsible ownership, support for animal cruelty laws, and lessons in animal care through the SF SPCA and other organizations.

NAIA strongly supports laws that preserve our right to own pets, recognize acceptable animal care practices based on sound veterinary science, clearly define animal cruelty and neglect, and hold animal owners fully accountable for animal welfare violations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patti Strand".

Patti L. Strand, president