



March 5, 2025

Senator Ron Latz
Chair, Judiciary and Public Safety Committee
3105 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

RE: Support of S.F. 1163: Office of Animal Protection bill

Dear Chair Latz and members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

Animal Folks is an animal protection organization based in Minnesota. We work to protect animals and fight cruelty through constructive and sustainable reforms of the criminal and civil justice systems.

We strongly support S.F. 1163, which will establish an Office of Animal Protection under the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension at the Department of Public Safety.

Over the years, Animal Folks has found gaps in Minnesota's criminal justice system and how this system responds to crimes of animal cruelty. Our research comes from collecting and analyzing over 2,000 animal cruelty cases (convictions) and interviewing multiple victims of animal cruelty as well as authorities involved with these crimes. With this data, we have seen a lack of statewide:

- oversight and accountability for enforcement of animal cruelty laws
- assistance and expertise in animal cruelty and law
- training and standards across disciplines, including investigations, prosecutions, veterinary forensics, animal care and housing, human welfare (victim advocacy)
- crime data and centralized animal cruelty reporting procedures
- resources, especially in economically poor communities

A failure to provide basic assistance, such as above, for authorities who are tasked to enforce animal cruelty laws has resulted in further harm to animals and also humans. The link between animal cruelty and human violence, such as child abuse, sexual abuse, and domestic violence, is well-documented.

Animal cruelty is a public safety issue, and we firmly believe the state must assume a role in preventing and responding to these crimes.

We ask for your support of S.F. 1163 which will create an Office of Animal Protection.

Sincerely,
Ann Olson
Founder and executive director, Animal Folks
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NOTE: As of March 1, 2025, Animal Folks has also collected over 6,200 petitions in support of the Office of Animal Protection bill (SF1163) representing all areas (every Senate and House district) of Minnesota.