



May 17, 2019

A Message from our Executive Director

The Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth has been actively soliciting the Solicitor General in hopes of having a voice in the changes that are about to take place in animal cruelty enforcement in Ontario. This is very much a top priority for our organization.

In early March, we were informed by the Ontario SPCA (OSPCA) that as of March 30th, and later extended to June 28, 2019, we would not be able to continue to enforce the Ontario SPCA Act (animal welfare legislation). The OSPCA, along with the Police, are the only organizations able to enforce animal cruelty legislation in Ontario. For the past 100 years, the OSPCA has been training and certifying agents and inspectors to fulfil this role. As an affiliate of the OSPCA, the Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth Humane Society has employed three individuals (one agent and two inspectors) to enforce the act in Waterloo Region (except Cambridge), the City of Stratford and Perth Region. In 2018 we responded to 769 animal cruelty calls in those communities. We were able to do this through an agreement with the OSPCA.

When the OSPCA decided to no longer enforce the act as of June 28th, it meant our agent and inspectors would also be stripped of their powers. This decision did not sit well with us. We are very concerned about the animals in our communities. After communicating our concerns with our local MPP's and the Solicitor General, Minister Sylvia Jones, we have now been informed that the ministry has filed a regulation to help enable willing Affiliates (that is us!) to continue enforcement until a new, permanent model is in place. I will be meeting with the Solicitor General's office next week to further discuss how this will roll out and how we can continue to be part of finding a long-term solution.

We need to focus on the features of a robust, professional enforcement system that is accountable, transparent and has a positive impact on communities. As the Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth, we believe we play an important role in law enforcement, whether to lead, assist or consult. Our own cruelty officers are one piece of a comprehensive and sophisticated system, which includes enforcing animal cruelty legislation, providing specialized knowledge, assisting policing forces, forensics, sheltering victims of crime, providing veterinary care and rehabilitation services. SPCAs and Humane Societies are the only specialized force in the country dedicated solely to animal protection – we must be properly funded and supported. Government oversight is important and many Humane Societies and SPCAs in the country operate under that oversight already, including KWHS and SPHS. The key is not whether we are a charitable organization, but instead, professional, accountable and transparent, which we are.

We are thrilled to know that the animals in our communities will continue to be protected after June 28th, by our organization and our professionals who are solely trained to provide that service. I look forward to continue working with the Province to find a permanent model.

Please take a few minutes now to share your thoughts to help improve animal welfare by completing the public survey the province has posted. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/protecting-ontarios-animals>

Together we can help ensure all animals are protected!

Kathrin Delutis
Executive Director