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LD 595

I am writing in opposition to the proposed changes in the state's spay-neuter program. Maine's successful low cost spay/neuter program, Help Fix Me (HFM), was adopted and administered by the Animal Welfare Program (AWP). In 2022, the legislative Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry unanimously passed LD 1828 that required the Animal Welfare Program to contract out the administration of the program as the result of continuing problems. However, a year later, the legislative mandate has yet to be implemented.

Instead of adhering to the previous mandate, the AWP has proposed changes to "transform the overall structure and design" of the program by changing HFM from a program that is accessible state-wide to a localized "spay/neuter event" program. Not only does this proposed change disregard the legislature's intent when passing LD 1828, it will make the program even more difficult for Mainers to access than it currently is.

If the AWP truly wants a successful and accessible program for all Mainers and their animal companions, these "major and substantive" proposed changes should be reviewed by the Committee before being implemented. LD 595, An Act to Require Major Substantive Rulemaking for the Companion Animal Sterilization Fund, gives stakeholders the opportunity to request the legislature make the AWP accountable in ignoring the legislature and stakeholders.