NEW LAWS SUPPORTING ANIMAL PROTECTION

Animal welfare advocates, legislators and shelter animals gathered at the Delaware Humane Association on July 31 as Governor Jack Markell signed four animal protection bills.

“These new policies further protect animals and people who are vulnerable in our community,” Governor Markell said. “It is a tremendous step forward for Delaware, thanks to collaboration among the Delaware General Assembly, pet owners, shelter officials, animal welfare advocates, enforcement personnel, and government officials.”

Governor Markell recognized state legislators, the Animal Welfare Task Force, a variety of animal protection organizations, and other advocates for their hard work and commitment to increasing animal protections in Delaware. A summary of the bills signed into law:

- **Senate Bill 201**, sponsored by Senators Patricia Blevins (D-Elsmere) and Karen Peterson (D-Stanton), and Representatives Earl Jaques (D-Glasgow) and Kim Williams (D-Newport): This law clarifies the roles and authority of the Delaware Division of Public Health Office of Animal Welfare. This bill not only authorizes the Department of Health and Social Services to enforce existing shelter standards, the animal population control program and spay/neuter fund, and companion animal welfare license plate funds, it also establishes an enforcement mechanism to do so. The bill also prohibits the use of inhumane gas chambers as a means of euthanasia.

- **House Bill 311**, sponsored by Representatives Earl Jaques (D-Glasgow) and Kim Williams (D-Newport), and Senators Patricia Blevins (D-Elsmere), Karen Peterson (D-Stanton), and David McBride (D-Hawk’s Nest): This law gives the Delaware Division of Public Health Office of Animal Welfare the ability to develop and implement a statewide training and certification program for Animal Control Officers and Animal Cruelty Agents.

- **SB 245**, sponsored by Senator Karen Peterson (D-Stanton) and Representative Early Jaques (D-Glasgow): This law protects animals seized in criminal activity, cruelty, and animal fighting from automatic euthanasia, instead allowing for evaluation of animals for adoptability by trained personnel. The bill also ensures that individuals involved in the criminal activity are prohibited from adopting the animals after their seizure or forfeiture.

- **HB 297**, sponsored by Representative Dennis Williams (D-Talleyville) and Senator Karen Peterson (D-Stanton): This law clarifies the Dangerous Dog Law to allow for easier enforcement by animal control agents.

- **SB 253**, sponsored by Senator David McBride (D-Hawk’s Nest) and Representative Michael Barbieri (D-Newark): This legislation authorizes the conveyance of the Airport Road Division of Motor Vehicles facility to the Colonial School District and conveys a portion of the parcel to be transferred to Faithful Friends Animal Society for the development of a new animal adoption center and community center.