



49651 Shenandoah Circle  
Canton, MI 48187

**ATTORNEYS FOR ANIMALS, INC.**

Respectfully submits the following position on:

SB 403

Attorneys for Animals, Inc. (AFA) is a Michigan non-profit and 501(c)(3) organization of legal professionals and animal advocates. We work within the legal system so animals are recognized and protected as individuals by combining advocacy, litigation and legislative efforts with education.

**BILL NUMBER AND DESCRIPTION:**

SB 403 (Knollenberg) Animals; animal shelters; methods of euthanizing animals; restrict to injection of certain commercially prepared solutions.

Amends 1969 287 PA (MCL 287.331 - 287.340) by adding sec. 8b.

**POSITION:**

Support

**EXPLANATION OF THE POSITION:**

SB 403 provides for humane euthanasia of dogs and cats in our state's animal control shelters, and codifies the current generally accepted standards for euthanasia by veterinarians, including the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Michigan Veterinary Medical Association. The MVMA's position is clear: "The use of carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide gas for euthanasia of shelter dogs and cats is not acceptable."<sup>1</sup>

[www.attorneysforanimals.org](http://www.attorneysforanimals.org)  
[info@attorneysforanimals.org](mailto:info@attorneysforanimals.org)

One of the most consequential decisions a shelter has to make is to take the life of an animal who has been entrusted to its care. It is reasonable for the state to impose a uniform standard that requires the method that is the safest and less painful to the dog or cat.

The bill would require the use of injectable drugs, currently an injection of sodium pentobarbital (referred to as EBI, for euthanasia by injection) rather than using carbon monoxide gas, which until recently was used by Michigan shelters.

SB 403 does not apply to veterinarians, but would regulate shelter workers who are trained in euthanasia methods.

A study commissioned by the American Humane Association concluded that EBI is less expensive than gas.<sup>ii</sup> Further, it poses fewer risks to shelter workers: there have been incidents of workers killed or injured by the gas.

A 2014 study indicates about half the states (23) require EBI (either specifying sodium pentobarbital or another substance); 13 states reference AVMA guidelines as the standard for euthanasia; and only 5 explicitly allow use of the gas chamber.<sup>iii</sup>

**ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, ATTORNEYS FOR ANIMALS, JANUARY 5, 2016**

**CONTACT PERSON AND E-MAIL: BEATRICE M. FRIEDLANDER, JD, PRESIDENT**

**BEEFRIEDLANDER@YAHOO.COM**

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<sup>i</sup> Position Statement on the Euthanasia of Dogs and Cats in Animal Shelters, Unanimously Approved by the MVMA Board of Directors on June 5, 2013, available at <http://www.michvma.org/?page=PositionStatements>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://michigandersforshelterpets.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/cost-analysis.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.generationwags.com/euthanasia-methods-by-state/>