

Advocates for Responsible Pet Ownership Survey

Response from the Nova Scotia Liberal Party

1. Will your party strengthen the anti-cruelty laws of Nova Scotia by working with the Judicial Department to increase fines and sentences for those persons that are found guilty of animal cruelty and/or neglect?

The Nova Scotia Liberals fought hard to strengthen the Animal Protection Act in the fall of 2008. Halifax Clayton Park Liberal MLA Diana Whalen proposed several changes during law amendments, including: strengthening the definition of distress (Section 21, Subsection 6), outlining a standard of care (Section 22), and the ability to impose harsher fines than the Bill originally put forth (Section 35). Liberals feel these changes will help to further guard against cruelty to animals.

2. Will your party work with the NS SPCA to build legislation that protects the quality of life of all companion animals in Nova Scotia - including those that are used for breeding and livestock purposes?"

Our party has worked with several SPCA members in the past (including Sean Kelly, president of the NS SPCA in 2008) to ensure that proposed legislation has been strengthened. We are always open to meeting with the SPCA to further see how we may be able to improve existing legislation and support the organization.

3. Will your party push to have all municipalities enacting humane animal laws and require that BSL be rescinded in those municipalities that have enacted such legislation? (Breed specific legislation enacts punitive laws based on breed of dog rather than the actions of negligent owner's regardless of breed or mix)

Liberals feel that the rights of municipalities to make and enforce their own bylaws should be respected and do not see a role for the provincial government to lobby for changes at the municipal level. The Liberal party believes that it can be most effective protecting animals and safeguarding the rights of animal owners by introducing changes within its jurisdiction. An example of this was the changes to the Animal Protection Act our party put forward last fall (see question 1).

4. Will your party increase funding to the NS SPCA to facilitate the hiring and training of more cruelty investigators to adequately address the need? (Currently other provinces are increasing funding ex. N.B. & Que.)

There are many not-for-profit organizations across the province doing excellent work and a Liberal government would strive to meet the needs of these organizations while recognizing that government must live within its means. To our knowledge, there has been no formal request made to increase funding to the SPCA. Our party would be open to meeting with the SPCA and discussing its needs.

5. Will your party support a province wide TNR (trap-neuter-release) program for feral cats?

Animal control issues fall under municipal jurisdiction and a Liberal government would support local efforts to address this issue. Our party is concerned with the thousands of unwanted cats born each year and realizes the burden they place on the SPCA's space and resources.