

A-34



Katherine Douglas *Public Comment - Group 1*

**From:** K.C. <kcandfinch@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 13, 2024 3:05 AM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** SBCAS

**Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.**

Dear County Board Members,

I am writing to share my experience as a volunteer with SB County Animal Services as work prevents me from attending the meeting on October 15th.

I moved to Santa Maria from SLO County a year ago and one of the biggest selling points for me was the low barrier volunteer opportunities at the county shelters that I saw advertised on social media. It felt welcoming, as if they wanted the community to be involved. That may seem simple, but animal rescue can feel like a closed society and unintentional gate keeping is common. Esme, the volunteer coordinator said "people want to help, we just have to show them how."

I love animals, but have learned that people have to come first. When we help people, we help the animals. I see that put into action every time I am at the shelter. From kind and helpful staff to friendly volunteers, everyone works together to create a better community for our four and two-legged friends. I see people coming up with innovative solutions and working with community partners for the best outcomes. I see people pulling together to help those in need. I am inspired constantly by the dedication of those I interact with.

I also see a large team of people, paid and unpaid, working under strong, creative, and knowledgeable leadership. I belong to a number of professional teams and interact with many more. One of the first things I noticed when I started volunteering was how highly people speak about Sarah Aguilar. They speak highly of her when she isn't around. They speak highly of her when she doesn't employ them. They seem to trust in her leadership in a way that is rare.

I came for the dogs, but stayed for the inspiring people. As hard and sad as the shelters can be, you are doing something very right here in Santa Barbara County.

Thank you for your time,  
K.C. de Clercq  
Santa Maria

## Katherine Douglas

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**From:** Kendra O'Connor <koconnor@bunssb.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 14, 2024 8:26 AM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** October 15th BOS Meeting Agenda Item A-34  
**Attachments:** October 15th BOS Meeting Agenda Item A-34.pdf

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Kendra Duncan O'Connor

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
Meeting of October 15, 2024,  
Agenda Item A-34

October 11, 2024

Dear Chair Lavagnino and Supervisors,

Santa Barbara County Animal Services (SBCAS) has been a part of my life for nearly 30 years. A majority of that time has been spent as a volunteer and board member with Bunnies Urgently Needing Shelter (BUNS) located at the Santa Barbara campus. Over the years many directors, staff and officers have come and gone. Since Sarah Aguilar arrived as Shelter Director, much has improved. Sarah, along with every member of the Animal Services team, works hard every day to make a difference in the lives of shelter animals. New programs have improved shelter operations as well as public relations. The annual report is a mere glimpse of a very complicated department.

Caring for abandoned animals can be physically and emotionally draining. Whether behind the scenes or hands on in the shelter, those doing this work LOVE animals, it is apparent in all they do. Regardless of how an animal ends up in the shelter system, each one has experienced the trauma of loss. All deserve a safe place to heal and a chance for a fresh start in life. Shelter staff & volunteers work tirelessly to ensure each animal has their needs met. This work is exhausting with the large influx of animals that continue to arrive at all three campuses. Facilities in Lompoc and Santa Barbara are in desperate need of repair increasing the need for additional foster homes and transfers to other rescues.

Animal Services officers respond to reports of abuse, neglect, nuisance or aggression every week. Veterinary team members provide medical care to hundreds of animals a month. Shelter staff deal with a variety of crisis daily while doing their best to keep pets and people together. All of this work is a monumental task with staff shortages, no full time veterinarian, aging facilities and a lack of proper funding. It is difficult to manage, especially when you are the lowest rung on the public health ladder.

SBCAS along with their partner agencies and many dedicated volunteers are making a difference in our local communities. Together we are better. Sarah Aguilar continues to foster and support these important relationships with respectful open dialogue. Her leadership and vision is greatly appreciated. I look forward to a day when there are enough homes and funding to save them all.

Sincerely,

Kendra Duncan O'Connor

## Katherine Douglas

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**From:** Deann Turner <deannturner@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 14, 2024 11:05 AM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Santa Barbara County Animal Services

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

**Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.**

My name is DeAnn Turner and I have been volunteering at the Santa Barbara Dog Shelter at 5473 Overpass Road since December 2022.

In the last 2 years, although the number of dogs coming in (strays owner surrenders, protective custody cases), have increase which is a reflection of the community, not the shelter, I have observed under the leadership of Sarah Aguilar & her staff members, the number of dogs getting adopted or transferred to rescue partners have increased. In addition, the Foster Program continually expands and the Day Outing program is an amazing program. Not only does it give the shelter dogs a break from the shelter, it helps promote their adoptability.

I see first hand how hard the staff & volunteers work. I see their compassion. I see their passion. I see how much they love & take care of the dogs. They (the staff & volunteers) give 100%+ plus every single day. Their devotion is truly inspiring. As a community, it is paramount we support our county shelter by volunteering, fostering, adopting & networking. With that, I respectfully request the Board of Supervisors provide the financial funding that is need to continual to support our community and our county shelter dogs.

Thank you,  
DeAnn Turner  
805 895 2035