

# General Public Comment - Group 1



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [sbcob](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment for the April 8th Board of Supervisors meeting  
**Date:** Sunday, April 6, 2025 8:51:24 PM

**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 Board of Supervisors,

I am submitting this public comment for the April 8th Board of Supervisors meeting. I do so anonymously, out of fear of retaliation or further discrimination. I urge you to take immediate action to address the systemic dysfunction and neglect at Santa Barbara County Animal Services in Goleta.

As a former volunteer who gave my time out of love for the animals, I had to walk away due to the toxic culture, lack of accountability, and the mistreatment of volunteers. I witnessed what many others have: retaliation for speaking up, serious medical issues ignored, dogs left confined for 24+ hours without walks, dogs euthanized without being promoted on social media, and a culture that punishes those who care too much.

This is not an isolated experience. I know of other long-time volunteers who were excluded, mocked, or even publicly criticized on social media after raising concerns. Meanwhile, it's the animals who suffer the most.

The shelter desperately needs volunteers and community support—but it is actively pushing us away.

I am asking you to:

- Investigate the shelter's leadership and internal culture
- Enforce basic standards of humane care
- Support a healthy, respectful environment for volunteers and staff

We have the heart and resources in this community to do better. What we need is courageous, compassionate leadership.

Please be the heroes these animals and our community deserve.

Sincerely,  
[Anonymous]

## Katherine Douglas

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**From:** Emma Rose <emmarosesb@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 7, 2025 8:37 AM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Public Comment – Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

**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.**

April 5, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing today out of concern for the animals at the Santa Barbara County Animal Shelter and the overall lack of accessibility and transparency in its operations—particularly around fostering.

I have tried multiple times to inquire about fostering and offering support. Calls have gone unanswered, and the few interactions I've had have felt dismissive and unhelpful. It should not be this difficult to help.

It is deeply discouraging to hear repeated reports of animals not receiving the medical care they need—both in the shelter and even while in foster homes. We all want to believe that our local shelter is a place where animals are cared for, respected, and protected. Right now, it doesn't feel that way.

The animals deserve better. And our community deserves a shelter system that welcomes support, provides clear communication, and prioritizes the health and safety of every animal in its care.

Sincerely,

Emma Lauter

## Katherine Douglas

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**From:** alisha dally <amd.sbv@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 7, 2025 9:03 AM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** URGENT REFORM NEEDED IN SB COUNTY SHELTERS

**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.**

To whom it may concern,

My name is Alisha Dally and I am a registered veterinary technician and Practice Manager in the Goleta/ Santa Barbara area. At our veterinary clinic, we strongly support our local shelter system by offering complimentary new adoption exams and first doses of prescription strength flea control for newly homed pets. We are also in the process of becoming a preferred vendor for the shelter system to provide medical treatment and surgical services to animals in need.

That said; I am deeply concerned by what I have witnessed and experienced in my professional interactions with Santa Barbara County Animal Services ( SBCAS) over this past year.

Despite our team's ongoing efforts to collaborate with the shelter in good faith, our interactions have been marked by:

- a dire lack of compassion toward the animals in their care
- shocking disrespect toward the volunteers who dedicate their time, hearts and services free of charge
- dismissiveness and unprofessional conduct toward veterinary professionals offering help
- hostility and obstruction when concerns are raised in the best interest of the animals

Most recently I reached out regarding a dog confiscated from a man now in custody. We know this dog. We care about him. We simply wanted to ask how we could best assist him, either through medical care, safe housing, or emotional support. Instead of cooperation, we were met with hostility, opacity and a disturbing lack of empathy. The dog is being secluded from volunteers who might walk him, was being hidden behind a sheet at first and now moved to an area of the shelter where he is not accessible to volunteers care at all. He is not a threat, he is a victim. Advocates for him are being treated like criminals for caring.

I have also submitted a formal complaint against ACO supervisor Joan Robb, whose behavior during our call was the most unprofessional I have ever encountered in my many years of veterinary work.

If this is the example set by leadership, it is no wonder the culture beneath her reflects the same lack of care and connection.

Call the shelter and you will experience it yourself:

- a receptionist who lacks basic courtesy or customer service skills; I've personally witnessed her turn away potential adopters simply because she did not want to get up from her desk.
- volunteers; many of whom are my close friends- are afraid to speak up for fear of being banned from the shelter altogether. Their silence is not apathy; it is fear.

This is not how a public, taxpayer-funded shelter should operate. Volunteers should be valued, not intimidated, Veterinary professionals should be welcomed, not dismissed and animals should receive basic care and compassion, not left behind dirty kennel doors left unseen and unwalked.

We are all supposed to be on ONE TEAM. But from what I see there is a small number of individuals with too much power and too little empathy making decisions that negatively impact every animal, volunteer, adopter and partner trying to help.

I urge you to examine shelter leadership, staff behavior, and protocols at SBCAS especially in Goleta. The animals deserve better. The public deserves better, and those of us offering real professional support deserve to be treated as allies not enemies.

Thank you for your time and serious attention to this very important matter.

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**Katherine Douglas**

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**From:** Jennifer Schuld <jenschuld@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 7, 2025 9:06 AM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Santa Barbara County Animal Shelter

**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 Board of Supervisors,

My name is Jennifer. I have adopted from the Goleta shelter in the past and wanted to give back, so I recently signed up to volunteer. However, after just two visits, I walked away heartbroken and deeply concerned.

The conditions at the Goleta shelter are disturbing. Kennels were left with feces and urine in them, and when I gently brought up that one of the dogs had goop in their eyes, the staff were completely dismissive. No one seemed interested in checking on the dog or even acknowledging the concern.

I'm a professional who works at Cottage Hospital. I wasn't trying to cause trouble—I just wanted to make sure a dog got the care they needed.

Animals in their care deserve clean spaces, medical attention, and kindness. Volunteers should be encouraged to speak up, not punished for it.

Please take action.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [sbcob](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment – Goleta Shelter Conditions  
**Date:** Monday, April 7, 2025 11:10:55 AM

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**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.

Hi,

I've noticed the mistreatment of volunteers and animal management at the Goleta Animal Shelter. I'd like this email to serve as a public complaint.

Please keep this anonymous.

## Katherine Douglas

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**From:** Michael Warner <mike@frontageroadstudios.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 7, 2025 12:22 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Santa Barbara County Animal Services - Public Comment

**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.**

I am writing this public comment to voice my concerns about the operations and management of the Santa Barbara County Animal Services facility located on Overpass Rd. in Goleta CA.

My primary concern is for the well being of the dogs that are sheltered there. It seems that there is a never ending supply of dogs that have been surrendered, abandoned, injured, or are otherwise stray animals. Even after many dogs are adopted or fostered out the kennels always seem full or nearly full.

While the paid staff works hard to care for these animals, and their jobs are undoubtedly difficult, it is also quite clear that the organization needs volunteers to assist with dog walking, exercise, and other forms of care.

My wife, an experienced dog owner and volunteer began volunteering at the shelter nearly a year and a half ago, and I have accompanied her on many exercise and dog walking visits. In the beginning we tried to dismiss the verbal abuse, alienation, public shaming and other disrespectful behavior towards us and other volunteers as just staff and management being overworked and over whelmed. However, through our experiences there we have come to recognize systemic failures, and dysfunctional practices in the operations and management of the shelter.

The shelter desperately needs volunteer help to assist in their mission of caring for and adopting out these community animals. Yet volunteers are not valued or treated with respect. Many come with the best intentions of serving for weeks, months or even years only to never return. And when volunteers try to raise their concerns to staff or management their concerns may be heard at some level but they are not adequately addressed. In fact, my wife, who is not a person that shies away from voicing her concerns, was belittled, yelled at, excluded, publicly shamed over social media, and dismissed... by staff and leadership of SBCAS.

This is no way to treat or retain dedicated volunteers... And the animals are the ones who suffer most.

The reason I am writing to the Board is to ask for additional resources to be directed towards addressing the many problems that are festering at SBCAS. Perhaps an independent investigation or audit of the standards of care for the animals and management of staff. Perhaps additional staff and/or training about how to treat the animals and retain volunteers. Below is a more complete list of possible solutions to address these problems.

We need the Board to step up and be hero's in our community for the benefit of these animals. It has become clear to me the staff and leadership are quite content with the status quo and are not looking to make significant improvements. This is simply not good enough for the animals in our community.

Respectfully,

Michael

## 10 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR SHELTER REFORM

### Fund and Hire Dedicated Dog Walkers

Allocate \$90,000 annually to hire 2–3 part-time or full-time Animal Care Technicians (ACTs) solely responsible for walking and enriching shelter dogs daily. Nearly half the dogs currently do not receive consistent outdoor time.

### Enforce Daily Minimum Standards of Care

Mandate that every dog receive two 20-minute walks per day, clean water at all times, a clean kennel, and proper medical observation. These are basic humane care standards that must be non-negotiable.

### Create Transparent Animal Care Logs

Implement a system to publicly track walks, enrichment, and medical flags per dog. This ensures transparency, accountability, and prevents cover-ups of neglect.

### Appoint an Independent Volunteer Liaison

Establish a neutral third-party liaison to mediate between volunteers and shelter staff. This role must be independent from current shelter leadership to restore trust and participation.

### Reinstate Dismissed Volunteers Who Broke No Rules

Volunteers who were removed without due process should be reinstated immediately if they did not violate safety or conduct policies. Dismissing critical volunteers during a staffing crisis harms animals.

### Launch an Anonymous Grievance & Whistleblower Process

Create a secure way for staff, fosters, and volunteers to report misconduct without fear of retaliation. Many contributors stay silent because they fear being pushed out or punished.

### Reevaluate Current Leadership & Advisory Influence

Conduct an external review of shelter leadership and former advisory figures involved in retaliation, false statements, and obstructive behavior. Public trust cannot be rebuilt without accountability.

### Build Partnerships with First Responders for Dog Enrichment

Invite local police, firefighters, and public service professionals to walk and socialize dogs regularly. This promotes community healing, staff morale, and mental stimulation for the animals.



### Revise Social Media and Adoption Promotion Strategy

Ensure urgent and at-risk dogs are consistently promoted via official SBCAS channels. Volunteers with proven reach and skill should be welcomed as partners—not viewed as competitors.

### Form a New Community Oversight Committee

Establish an independent community-led oversight board with rotating membership to review shelter conditions, staffing issues, and animal outcomes on a monthly basis.

Michael Warner

mike@frontageroadstudios.com

c: 805.455.6364

**From:** [Hannah Rose Harkness](#)  
**To:** [sbcob](#)  
**Date:** Monday, April 7, 2025 4:24:12 PM

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**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 Board of Supervisors,

I'm writing today with a sincere request: please do more to improve the conditions for the animals at Santa Barbara County Animal Services and to treat the volunteers with the respect they deserve.

The animals rely on us for everything—care, comfort, safety, and love. And the volunteers who show up every day to help are doing it from the heart. They should feel supported, not pushed away.

Please take action to create a cleaner, more compassionate environment for the animals and a welcoming, respectful culture for the people who give their time to help them.

Thank you,  
Hanna