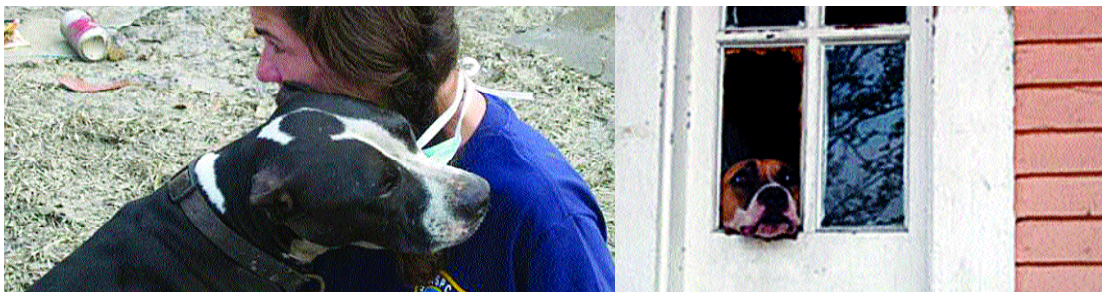


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Never Again: Louisiana Pet Evacuation Bill Provides For People And Pets In A Disaster

Louisiana citizens urge fellow residents to:
Ask their state Senators/Representatives to support the Pet Evacuation Bill.
Call 225-342-2040 today for their contact information.

Join the People & Pets March:
Monday, April 17, 2:30 p.m., State Capitol in Baton Rouge.

Attend the Hearing for SB-607:
Tuesday, April 18, 9:00 a.m., State Capitol in Baton Rouge.

MEDIA CONTACT: Save Our Pets at pets@pets911.org or 504-305-4113

Baton Rouge, LA • April 17, 2006—People and their pets march to the steps of the state capitol in solidarity for Louisiana Senator Heulette Fontenot's Pet Evacuation Bill SB-607. In response to the tens of thousands of pets left stranded in Katrina's broken homes and toxic waters, citizens send an *"If I leave, they leave"* message to the Louisiana legislature.

Senator Fontenot's Senate Bill No. 607 (SB-607) Pet Evacuation Bill requires state and parish homeland security and emergency preparedness agencies "to consult with experts in the fields of animal sheltering, veterinary medicine, public health and safety, and other professional and technical personnel deemed appropriate to formulate emergency operation plans for the humane evacuation, transport, and temporary sheltering of service animals and household pets in times of emergency or disaster." [SB-607: www.legis.state.la.us/billdata/streamdocument.asp?did=375498]

Realizing an emergency plan with no animal component is out of touch with constituents, Senator Fontenot told reporters: "I felt we were derelict in our duties to the citizens of Louisiana, because we didn't make arrangements for pets. A lot of people refused to evacuate because they weren't going to leave their pets behind."

Laura K. Maloney, executive director of the Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, estimates animal protection volunteers recovered 16,000 animals in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. (In New Orleans alone, 50,000 to 70,000 dogs were pre-Katrina family members.) Most ended up in shelters around the U.S. Only 3,000 were reunited with guardians.

Many Louisiana disaster victims were forced to choose between survival and their pets. Unforgivable images are etched into our nation's conscience: A white dog is ripped from a boy's arms as he boards a bus. A bewildered yellow Lab watches his family disappear in a helicopter. An elderly woman cannot receive medical care unless she deserts her cats. A man swims and walks for miles with his dog, only to learn he must abandon his loyal friend.

Long after the last humans had evacuated, thousands of pets roamed empty streets. Many survived water and wind, only to succumb to dehydration and starvation. Seven months beyond the storm, animal advocates continue to rescue and rehabilitate displaced pets.

To ensure animal companions are never again left to suffer and die, SB-607 advocates encourage Louisiana residents to contact their state Senators and Representatives, join the April 17 People & Pets March, and attend the April 18 hearing for SB-607.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Save Our Pets at pets@pets911.org or 504-305-4113