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**LINCOLN COUNTY**

115 WEST MAIN STREET  
THIRD FLOOR, CITIZENS CENTER  
LINCOLNTON, NORTH CAROLINA 28092  
704/736-8473 FAX 704/736-8820

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January 28, 2011

North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
Veterinary Division  
ATTN: Dr. Lee Hunter, DVM, Director, Animal Welfare Section  
1030 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1030

Dear Dr. Hunter:

In order to correct deficiencies noted by inspector Gary Stamey during his December 17, 2010, site inspection, Lincoln County Animal Services is in the process of updating and implementing new policies and procedures as further outlined herein. Lincoln County understands the seriousness of the findings of non-certified personnel euthanizing animals, improper or incomplete documentation of procedures, and improper utilization and maintenance of euthanasia equipment within our shelter.

Accordingly, the following items have been addressed to date:

**Carbon Monoxide Chamber:** The chamber was immediately placed OUT OF SERVICE on the afternoon of December 17, 2010. The gas bottles have been removed from the chamber and returned to the supplier, and the front door on the chamber has been padlocked. Lincoln County will not request reinstatement of its privileges to utilize the carbon monoxide chamber. With full support from county administration on the permanent ban on euthanasia by carbon monoxide, the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners, at its January 24, 2011, meeting, unanimously approved the permanent removal and rendering unusable of the carbon monoxide chamber from the Animal Services facility.

**Euthanasia Policy Manual:** The Lincoln County Euthanasia Policy manual was not available at the shelter during the inspection. This manual had been packed away with personal belongings of one of our employees who had a pending disciplinary action on December 16, 2010. Lincoln County Animal Services has created a new Euthanasia Manual and has updated the Euthanasia Policy to remove any references to euthanasia by means of carbon monoxide gas. This policy has been reviewed and approved by Dr. Karen Miller, DVM, and by the HSUS policy section.

**Controlled Substance Policy:** In addition to the euthanasia policy, the Controlled Substance

Policy has been greatly updated with new policies and procedures restricting access to euthanasia medications.

In light of Lincoln County's efforts to remedy the deficiencies as described above, we would request the following modifications to the civil penalties assessed by you as a result of Mr. Stamey's inspection:

- (1) reduction or elimination of the \$5,000 penalty assessed against Lincoln County to offset the cost incurred by the county to remove the carbon monoxide chamber and make necessary repairs to the roof of the facility;
- (2) reduction of the \$1,000 penalty assessed against Matthew Lovelace to \$500 to offset the cost associated with retraining of Animal Services staff in the areas identified as deficient; and
- (3) permanent revocation of Lincoln County Animal Services' authorization to euthanize animals by means of carbon monoxide.

In addition to the remedies described above, Lincoln County Animal Services shall:

- (1) retrain all Certified Euthanasia Technicians and staff members in proper euthanasia rules, regulations, policies, procedures and protocols;
- (2) retrain all Certified Euthanasia Technicians and staff members in proper documentation requirements for shelter records, procedures and events; and
- (3) require all Animal Services Officers to maintain, in a current status, Certified Euthanasia Technician credentials.

If you have any questions, please contact Interim Director of Animal Services Ron Rombs by email ([rrombs@lincolncounty.org](mailto:rrombs@lincolncounty.org)) or by phone (704-736-9385). Thank you for your consideration and assistance in resolving these matters.

Yours very truly,



Jeffrey A. Taylor  
County Attorney

JAT/j

cc: Ronald D. Rombs, Interim Director of Animal Services  
George A. Wood, County Manager  
Martha Lide, Assistant County Manager  
Audrey Setzer, Human Resources Director