

BCSPCA
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS

2024 Provincial Election Toolkit

How to talk to your candidates
about animal welfare





Your vote is their voice!

The BC SPCA's mission is to enhance the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia. As part of that mission, we advocate for better animal-related laws and policies at all levels of government. **We encourage our supporters and all British Columbians to do the same.**

This toolkit will help you talk to your 2024 provincial election candidates about the importance of animal welfare.

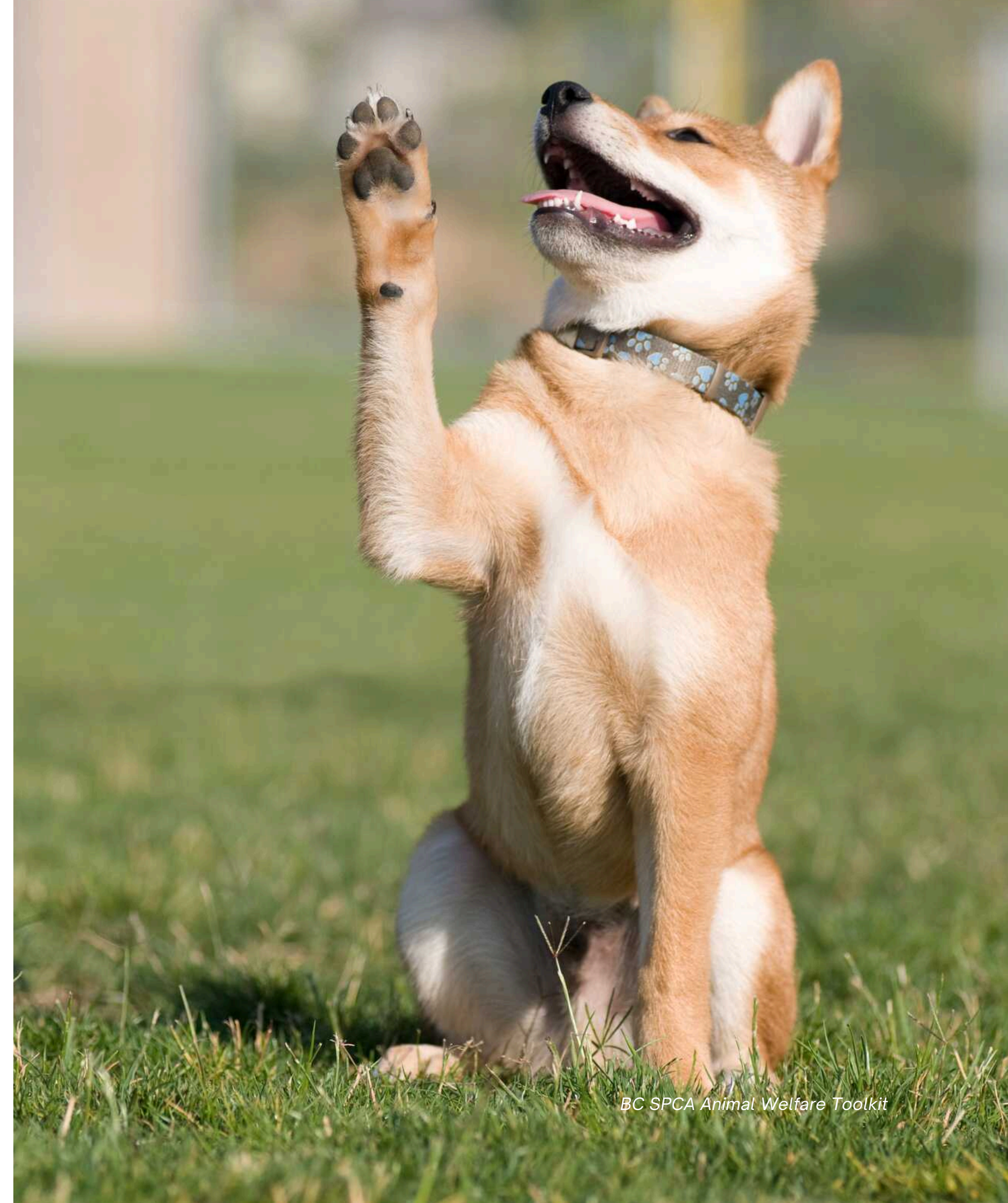
Vote with animals in mind

Animal welfare matters to British Columbians; it should matter to our elected representatives too!

We can each make individual choices to improve animal welfare, but we need government leadership for large-scale policy change.

You can help shape the next four years in our province by talking to your election candidates and voting for those who share your commitment to animal welfare.

Animals can't vote, but you can!



How to vote for animals

Register to vote

Register at
eregister.electionsbc.gov.bc.ca.

Registering in advance makes voting faster and easier, and you'll get important updates from Elections BC.



Find your district

Find your electoral district at
mydistrict.elections.bc.ca.

There will be new electoral districts for the 2024 provincial election. Your electoral district determines your candidates and voting locations.



Find your candidates

Find your local candidates at
elections.bc.ca/2024-provincial-election/candidate-list or watch for ads and signs in your community.

The candidate list will be finalized on September 28.



How to vote for animals

Talk to your candidates (all of them)

A candidate's job is to find out what matters to you and your community.

Tell candidates **from all parties** that you care about animal welfare and ask if they share your commitment to making B.C. a safer, more caring place for **all** of us. You never know who will be elected and who could be a valuable ally for animals.

During their campaigns, candidates may knock on your door, attend local events, join town halls or participate in debates. **Speaking to them in person makes an impact!**

You can also email, drop a letter at their campaign office or message them on social media.



Vote!

When you vote on **October 19**, cast your ballot for the candidate or party that you feel shares your commitment to animal welfare and would be the best representative for all British Columbians - including the animals.

Find out where and how to vote at <https://elections.bc.ca/2024-provincial-election>.



Tips for talking to your candidates

Be prepared

Read the BC SPCA's policy recommendations and think about what's important to you, why it matters and what you want our next provincial government to do about it.

Get personal

Have these issues affected you personally? What about others in your community? Speaking from experience and telling candidates the impact on their voters makes it more meaningful.

Keep it brief

Candidates have a lot of people to talk to and a lot of emails to read before the election. Be direct, tell them what you want them to do and why, share a quick story and thank them for their time.

Be polite

Even if you don't agree with a candidate's position on an issue or response to a question, be respectful and polite.

Follow up

Ask how they'll demonstrate their support for animal welfare during and after the election. If they commit to taking action, let us know at advocacy@spca.bc.ca!

Our policy recommendations

The BC SPCA has asked B.C.'s political parties to commit to taking action on six key animal welfare issues.

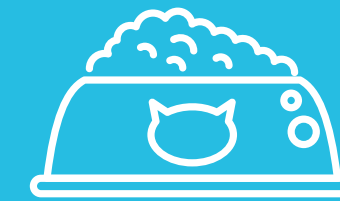
This toolkit summarizes each of the key issues and provides questions to ask your candidates.

You can read the full recommendations at:
<https://spca.bc.ca/2024-Provincial-Platform-Recommendations>

Pet-friendly
housing



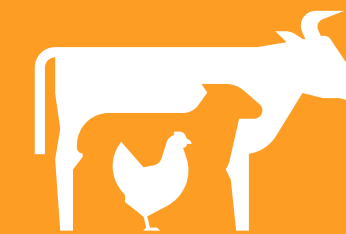
Pet
food banks



Emergency
management



Farmed animal
welfare



Pet
microchips



One Health/One
Welfare





House people & pets together

Pets provide love, support and connection for their families, but it's extremely hard to find pet-friendly housing in B.C. Vulnerable people (like those with low incomes, young people, seniors and those fleeing domestic violence) rely on their pets the most, but they also face the greatest housing barriers.

No one should have to make the heartbreaking choice between a home and a member of their family.

Ask your candidates:

- Did you know that two-thirds of British Columbians agree that the provincial government should immediately create policies that improve the availability and affordability of pet-friendly housing?
- If elected, would you take action to engage with housing stakeholders to find collaborative solutions that work for tenants, landlords, stratas and co-ops?



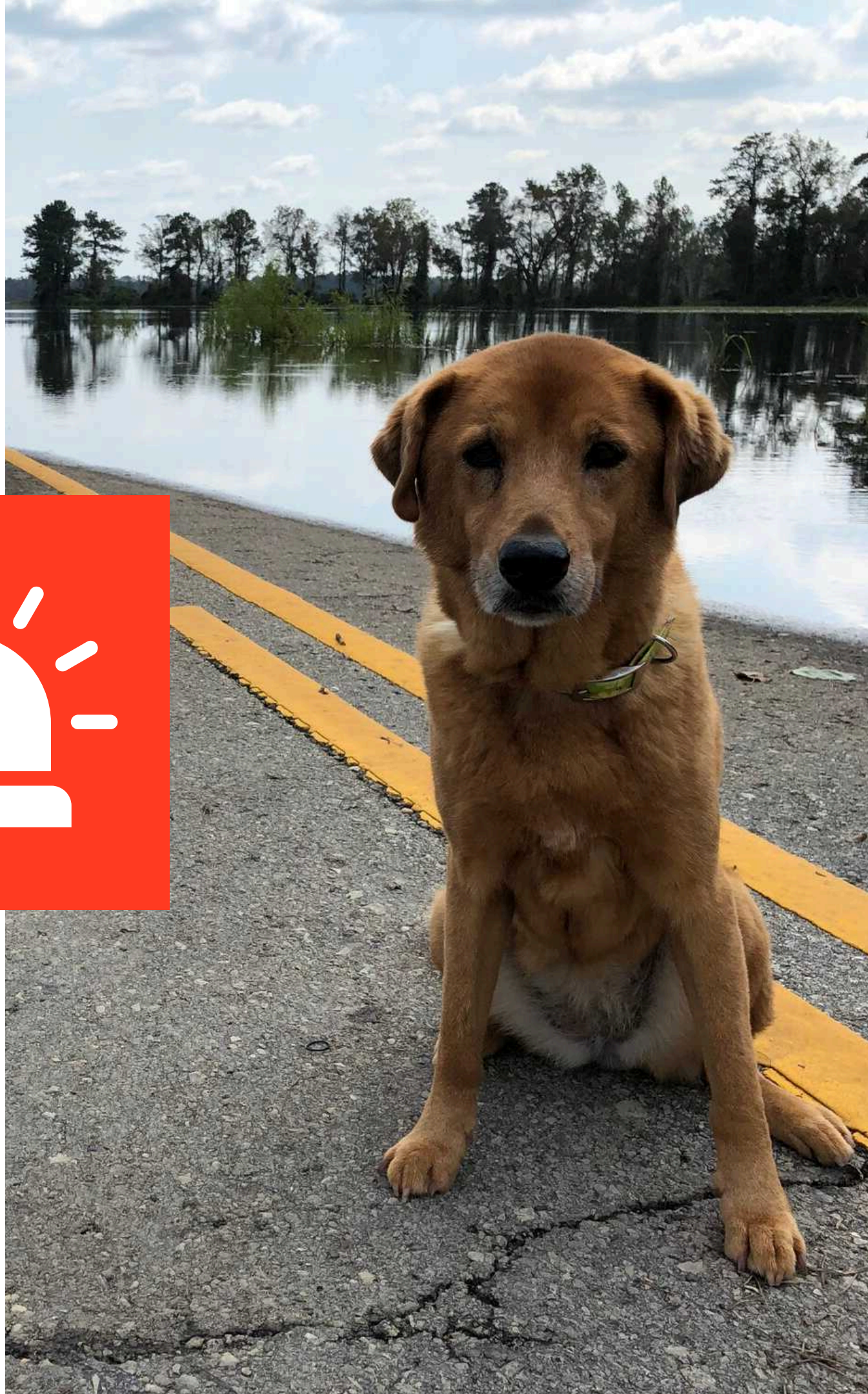
Put food on everyone's plate

People going through hard times will often share their own food with their pets or make sacrifices to buy pet food, including cutting back how much they eat, making late payments on bills or not buying other essential items. The demand for pet food assistance, like the BC SPCA's provincial pet food bank, keeps rising and donations simply can't keep up.

Provincial support for pet food in food banks would reduce both human and pet food insecurity.

Ask your candidates:

- Did you know that 77% of Canadians would forgo their own meals to make sure their pet had enough to eat?
- If elected, would you take action to provide pet food and supplies in food banks and food security programs supported by the provincial government?



Keep us all safe in emergencies

Animals are important members of our families and our communities. The new *Emergency and Disaster Management Act* considers animals in emergency planning, but they also need to be included in evacuations and recovery.

Provincial Emergency Support Services should help people find pet-friendly accommodations and access food, supplies and veterinary care. Post-emergency financial assistance should include essential food and supplies for animals.

Ask your candidates:

- Did you know that excluding animals from emergency management can have deadly consequences for both people and animals?
- If elected, would you take action to expand Emergency Support Services and post-emergency financial assistance to all animals included in the *Emergency and Disaster Management Act*?

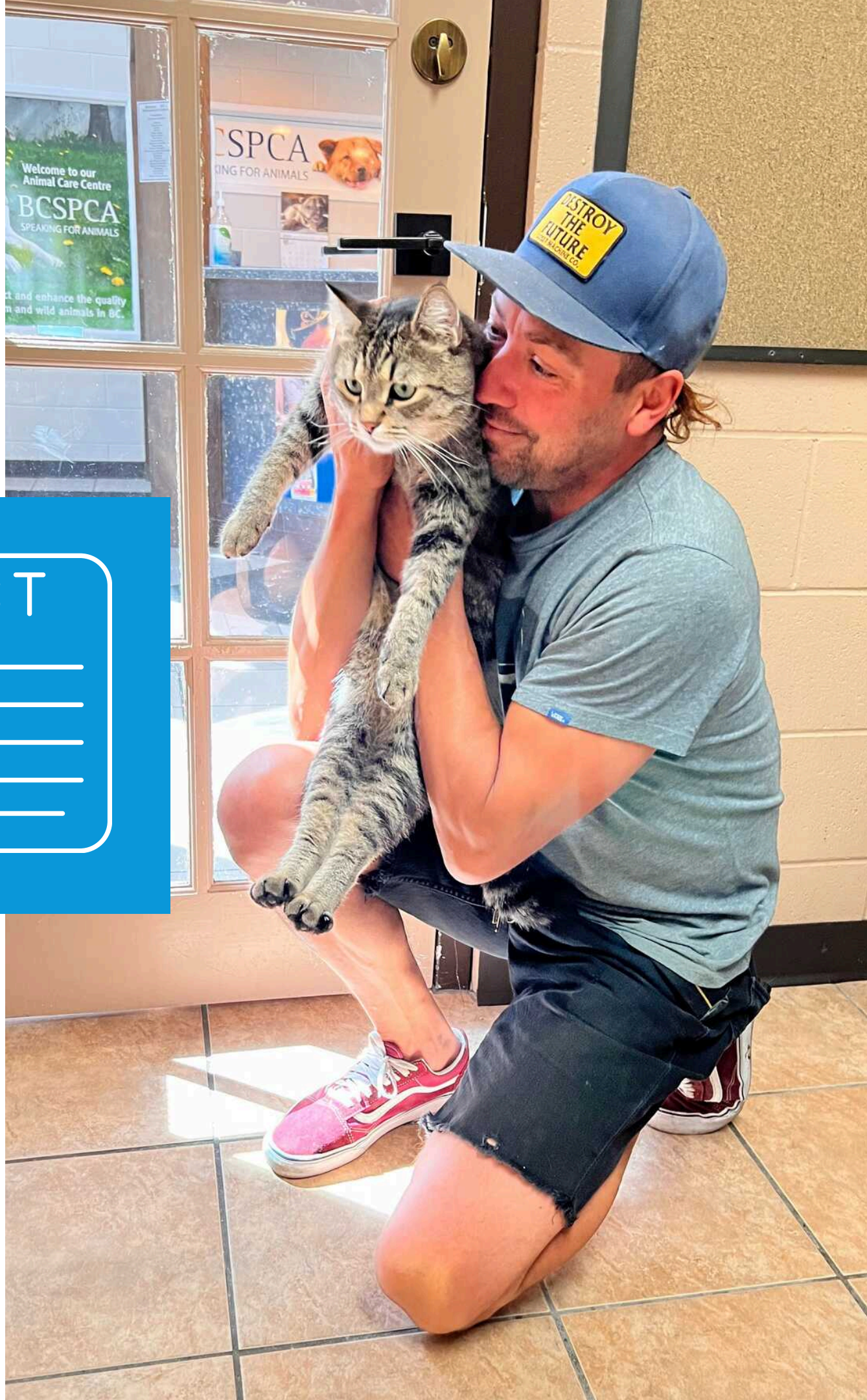


Proactively protect farmed animals

British Columbians are increasingly demanding transparency and accountability for the care of commercially farmed animals. Last year, the provincial Farmed Animal Welfare Advisory Committee made up of farmers, meat processors, veterinarians and representatives from the RCMP, BC SPCA and the National Farm Animal Care Council agreed on what needs to be done to improve the welfare of farmed animals in this province.

Ask your candidates:

- Did you know that over 22 million farmed animals are raised in B.C. each year, but we have no proactive, independent compliance system to monitor and report on their welfare?
- If elected, would you take action to create a new function within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to inspect and enforce minimum animal welfare standards on commercial farms?



Reunite families & enable traceability

Microchips provide unique, permanent identification for pets and they are safe and relatively inexpensive and painless to implant.

Many other places around the world require microchips to help reunite lost pets with their families, trace disease outbreaks and dangerous or nuisance animals, and monitor responsible breeding practices.

Ask your candidates:

- Did you know that dogs with microchips are three times more likely to be returned to their families if they get lost, and cats with microchips are 20 times more likely to be returned?
- If elected, would you take action to require microchips for all cats and dogs in B.C. like many other countries around the world?



Use a One Health/One Welfare lens for policy decisions

The deep connections between human health and well-being, animal welfare and environmental health have always been there, but now they're gaining much-needed recognition around the world.

Considering our interconnected health, welfare and well-being in all policy decisions and taking coordinated, interdisciplinary action will benefit all of us.

Ask your candidates:

- Do you agree that our health and well-being depend on the welfare of animals and the health of the natural environment (and vice versa)?
- If elected, would you take action to evaluate issues, policies and decisions through a One Health/One Welfare lens to find interdisciplinary solutions that benefit the animals, people and natural environment of B.C.?

Need help writing to your candidate?

Sample letter/email/DM

Dear [candidate's name],

I'm a voter in your electoral district, and I'm urging you to commit to animal welfare in this election.

Animals are important members of our families and communities, and they need to be protected by provincial laws and policies. If you're elected, please act on the BC SPCA's policy recommendations to make our province a safer, more caring place for animals and people:

- House people and pets together,
- Put food on everyone's plate,
- Keep us all safe in emergencies,
- Proactively protect farmed animals,
- Require microchips to reunite families and allow traceability, and
- Use a One Health/One Welfare lens to evaluate policy decisions based on our shared health and well-being.

Thank you,
[your name, address and postal code]

Sample social media posts

A lack of pet-friendly housing hurts people and animals. @[candidate's handle], what will you do to house people and pets together?

I support the BC SPCA's policy recommendations for the 2024 provincial election. @[candidate's handle], do you?

77% of Canadians would go hungry to feed their pets. @[candidate's handle], will you help end human and animal food insecurity?

B.C.'s 22 million farmed animals need an independent, proactive welfare inspection system. @[candidate's handle], will you implement the Farmed Animal Welfare Advisory Committee's recommendations?

Animals, people and the environment are connected. @[candidate's handle], will you evaluate decisions on our shared health, welfare and well-being?

Use #IVoteforAnimals for your posts!

Watch for our email campaign!

In early October, we'll provide an email template that you can send to your local candidates with just one click.

Join thousands of BC SPCA supporters and concerned British Columbians to let your candidates know that animal welfare matters in this election!





www.spca.bc.ca

[1-855-622-7722](tel:1-855-622-7722)

advocacy@spca.bc.ca

The BC SPCA is a non-partisan organization and we do not support or oppose any political party or candidate. We work with and advocate to all levels of government to enhance the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia and beyond.