

PennLive: Cumberland County woman designs license plate targeting pet overpopulation

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Pennsylvania motorists can now advertise their support for preventing pet overpopulation on their bumpers thanks to a new license plate.

The “Spay/Neuter Saves Lives” plate is the brainchild of Essie Petrovich of Hampden Township, a founder of the Spay Neuter Assistance Program (SNAPofPA.org), which helps pet owners in the Harrisburg area cover the costs of sterilization surgeries.

Petrovich, who designed the plate and worked with PennDOT to get it approved, will be honored as the Humane Society of the United States’ Advocacy Partner of the Year for her work on the license plate at a ceremony on the Capitol steps at 12:30 p.m. Monday.

In addition to spreading the message statewide about the importance of spaying/neutering cats and dogs to control the pet population and slow the tide of unwanted shelter animals, the plate will raise critical funds for spay/neuter surgeries, which can run into the hundreds of dollars.

Proceeds from the sale of each plate, available for \$68 through the [SNAP website](#), will be used solely to finance surgeries for pets belonging to those who cannot afford the cost. Since its founding in 1981, SNAP has been responsible for the spaying/neutering of 117,000 cats and dogs.

Many animal shelters in Pennsylvania take in more dogs and cats than they have adopters and have to euthanize far too many helpless animals, Petrovich said.

“The euthanasia rate of cats and dogs in shelters has been creeping up since spay/neuter services were put on hold during the COVID-19 crisis,” she said. “I am hoping this license plate will help raise enough funds to stem the tide of this trend.”

The award presentation is being held in conjunction with Humane Lobby Day at the Capitol. Among the bills animal lovers would like to see become law are Victoria's Law (HB 846), which would ban the sale of puppy mill dogs in pet stores, a ban on pigeon shoots (HB 2139), a ban on the declawing of cats (HB 508) and restrictions on the use of beagles in research.