

Talking Points to Protect Companion Animal Transport

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Use these points when speaking with state legislators, agriculture department officials, or state veterinarians.

1. We support containment and we're already doing our part.

Our organizations have expanded access to preventive parasiticides, increased veterinary oversight, and trained staff to identify and report suspected cases. We are partners in this response, and we ask that the regulatory environment reflect that partnership.

2. Our ask: a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) framework, not a blanket ban.

A CVI requires a licensed veterinarian to inspect each animal and sign off that it shows no signs of NWS infestation. That's meaningful protection. A statewide prohibition shuts down life-saving work entirely, including healthy, treated animals with families waiting for them.

3. This approach has federal and scientific backing.

The USDA's own framework for agricultural animals — the highest-risk category — is zone- and inspection-based, not a blanket ban. USDA's National Continuity of Business Movement Guidance explicitly excluded companion animals from mandatory requirements, deferring the framework to state discretion. Veterinary schools, shelter medicine programs, and national animal welfare organizations all reached the same conclusion: require treatment with long acting parasiticides, require a CVI with attention to NWS signs, and confine requirements to infestation zones.

4. Many states have already adopted this. We're asking you to hold that line.

A CVI framework is scientifically proportionate, operationally workable, and consistent with how animal disease risk has historically been managed. We are asking you to adopt it, or to hold that line if you already have.

5. A ban doesn't just inconvenience us, it risks lifesaving.

Interstate transport isn't optional for shelters. It's how we manage capacity, place animals, and keep communities from being overwhelmed. Our organizations cannot survive a categorical ban that shuts down transfer entirely, and neither can the animals in our care.

6. We want to work with you. Please talk to us before escalating policy.

We welcome a direct conversation with your office and your state veterinarian about operational realities, compliance logistics, and community consequences. We have the veterinary relationships, staff capacity, and commitment to comply with rigorous, evidence-based requirements. We just need a framework that keeps the work possible.

For questions about NWS compliance or shelter transport operations, contact your Best Friends regional representative.