



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 4/28/2026

To: County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Health Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Nolan Sullivan, 707-565-4774; Amelyn Olson, 707-565-2696

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Department of Health Services Animal Services and Public Health Laboratory Fees (Second Reading)

Recommended Action:

- A) Adopt an ordinance titled "An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, adopting new fees and adjusting fees effective July 1, 2026, for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Sonoma County Animal Services." (Second Reading)
- B) Adopt an ordinance titled "An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, adopting new fees and adjusting fees effective July 1, 2026, for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Sonoma County Public Health Laboratory." (Second Reading)

Executive Summary:

On March 24, 2026, at a regular meeting, the Board of Supervisors introduced ordinances to adopt new fees and adjust existing fees for the Department of Health Services (hereinafter "DHS" or "the Department"), in the areas of Animal Services and the Public Health Laboratory, effective July 1, 2026. This Board item recommends adoption of those ordinances.

The Board of Supervisors is authorized to establish fees to recover the reasonable cost of providing certain services. Fees are imposed for a specific benefit conferred or service provided directly to the payor that is not provided to those not charged, and which does not exceed the reasonable cost to provide the benefit or service. Fees are also imposed for reasonable regulatory costs including enforcement inspections, investigations, and audits.

The Department requests an effective date of July 1, 2026, for new and amended fees associated with Sonoma County Animal Services and the Sonoma County Public Health Laboratory. Adding or revising fees in these areas requires Board adoption of an ordinance.

Discussion:

Sonoma County Animal Services

Sonoma County Animal Services (SCAS) provides sheltering and field services to areas within their jurisdiction, including unincorporated areas of the County, the City of Santa Rosa, and the City of Healdsburg. SCAS is also responsible for rabies control for the entire County. SCAS services a geographic area of approximately 1,575 square miles and includes an animal shelter that serves nearly 2,800 animals annually.

Program Fees

The Department is proposing targeted revisions to several Sonoma County Animal Services (SCAS) fees, along with the addition of two fees to the recommended fees and charges schedule to better recover service costs and support deposit processing.

Most Animal Services fees are intentionally set below full cost recovery to encourage adoptions, prevent overcrowding at the shelter, and encourage compliance with regulations. Most fees are proposed to increase by approximately 3%, in line with cost-of-living adjustments in approved bargaining agreements. Some fees are increasing by higher amounts as discussed below. If approved, the fees are anticipated to increase revenues by \$52,767. This will still leave the department short of full cost recovery on services, the balance of which are subsidized by the General Fund. The proposed fee revision is a necessary step to strengthen cost recovery, align fees more closely with the actual cost of services, and ensure the Department can continue meeting its mandated animal care and public safety responsibilities.

Fee Increases over 3% and New Fees

Proposed Fee increases above 3% are due to the following cost drivers:

- Veterinary pharmaceuticals and vaccines have increased by approximately 25%
- Medical and animal care supplies have increased by 4%
- Many fees are materially below cost and are being incrementally adjusted to align with actual service costs

Two new fee categories are proposed to address pet disposal services and outside livestock transport. These fees are proposed to support cost recovery for services already being provided, improve transparency around officer-initiated versus walk-in disposal services, and establish a mechanism to bill owners for third-party livestock transport costs.

The proposed Animal Control Officer (ACO) Pet Disposal Pickup fee (\$210) would apply when an Animal Control Officer picks up a deceased animal for disposal at the animal owner’s request. This fee reflects officer time, vehicle use, and disposal costs associated with field response. The fee amount aligns with the combined cost of the underlying disposal and officer response components.

The proposed Outside Livestock Transport (at cost) would apply when SCAS must utilize external vendors to transport large animals. Charges vary based on factors such as animal size, number of animals, transport distance, and level of care required. These costs are invoiced to SCAS by external providers (e.g., Sonoma Community Animal Response Team), and SCAS subsequently invoices the animal owner to recover the associated costs. Historically, recovery of these costs from owners has been challenging.

This structure clarifies the distinction between walk-in disposal services and officer-initiated field response, improves administrative efficiency, simplifies fee tracking, and reduces confusion for both staff and the public.

Description	New Fee
ACO Pet Disposal Pickup	\$210.00
Outside Livestock Transport	Varies

Public Health Laboratory

The Public Health Laboratory provides clinical, environmental, and rabies testing. These fee-based testing services aid doctors, hospitals, acute care facilities, environmental health agencies, and Sonoma County Animal Services in diagnosing infectious diseases and performing enforcement duties.

Program Fees

Fees support cost recovery for Public Health Lab services, supplemented by grants and 1991 Health Realignment funds. The fee schedule was last updated for FY 2025-2026 with an 8% increase. Laboratory fees were subsidized by Realignment funding \$1,678,411 in FY 2024-2025 to offset overall operating costs and maintain public-benefit services. Realignment included in the FY 2025-2026 budget totals \$1,146,530.

Fee Increases over 3% and New Fees

Most Public Health laboratory fees to increase by 3% to keep pace with increased operational costs associated with personnel. The Frozen Yogurt Panel (includes both Yeast & Mold Count and Coliform for soft serve) is proposed to increase from \$38.50 to \$79.20 (105%). This increase corrects an error in the preparation of the FY 2025-2026 fee schedule, which understated the actual cost of providing the service.

The overall increase in revenue for FY 2026-2027 Public Health Laboratory services is estimated at \$16,085.

Description	New Fee
Shiga toxin-positive fecal broths (for Title 17 - fee applies to Local Health Jurisdiction of submitting facility)	\$119.48

Strategic Plan:

None

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

On March 24, 2026, the Board adopted Resolutions No. 26-0090 reading the title and waiving further reading of a proposed ordinance titled “An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, adopting new fees and adjusting fees effective July 1, 2026, for Sonoma County Animal Services,” pursuant to Sonoma County Code Chapter 5, Section 5-4 and Resolution 26-0092 reading the title and waiving further reading of a proposed ordinance titled “An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, adopting new fees and adjusting fees effective July 1, 2026, for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services Public Health Laboratory,” pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 101325.

On August 26, 2025, the Board adopted an ordinance titled “An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, adopting new fees and adjusting fees effective October 1, 2025, for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Sonoma County Animal Services.” and adopted an ordinance titled “An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, adopting new fees and adjusting fees effective October 1, 2025, for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Sonoma County Public Health Laboratory.”

On August 12 2025, the Board adopted Resolutions No. 25-0385 introducing, reading the title of and waiving the reading of two ordinances titled “An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, adopting new fees and adjusting fees effective October 1, 2025, for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Sonoma County Animal Services” and Resolution No. 25-0387 introducing, reading the title of and waiving the reading of two ordinances titled “An Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, adopting new fees and adjusting fees effective October 1, 2025, for the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Sonoma County Public Health Laboratory.”

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		\$68,852	
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures		\$68,852	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other		\$68,852	
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources		\$68,852	

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The fee adjustments included in this item are estimated to net to \$68,852 in additional revenue, which has been included in the FY 2026-2027 Recommended Budget. Total forecasted revenues for Sonoma County Animal Services are \$431,587 and the Clinical Laboratory is \$291,886, for a total of \$723,473.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Sonoma County Animal Services

Attachment 1 - Animal Services Ordinance

Attachment 2 - Animal Services Post-Adoption Summary

Public Health Laboratory

Attachment 3 - Public Health Laboratory Ordinance

Attachment 4 - Public Health Laboratory Post-Adoption Summary

Agenda Date: 4/28/2026

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None