
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5575

AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO REVISE MUNICIPAL ANIMAL SHELTER REGULATIONS.

SUMMARY

This bill requires municipal or regional dog pounds to have mechanical heating and cooling systems that can maintain an indoor ambient temperature of between 55 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit, unless a state-licensed veterinarian requires other temperatures for medical reasons. It also imposes additional rules for these dog pounds (see below), and authorizes the agriculture commissioner to enforce these provisions.

By law, the commissioner may inspect dog pounds and other facilities where domestic animals are kept and issue orders to correct any deficiencies found. The bill requires the commissioner to give municipal animal control officers (ACOs) an inspection report with findings within five days after an inspection. The ACO must give a copy of the report to the municipality's chief elected official and police department or ACO supervisor within 30 days after receiving it.

Lastly, the bill requires the commissioner to submit any revised regulations for municipal dog pounds that are in process as of the bill's passage to the Regulation Review Committee by September 1, 2023. (By law, he may adopt regulations on the construction and maintenance of dog pounds or other facilities where domestic animals are kept.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the provisions setting out rules for municipal or regional dog pounds are effective October 1, 2023.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MUNICIPAL OR REGIONAL DOG POUNDS

In addition to the air temperature requirement, the bill imposes the following rules for a municipal or regional dog pound:

1. dogs cannot share the same primary enclosure, except dams (i.e., the mother of a puppy or puppies) or foster dams and their puppies;
2. primary enclosures must be provided for each cat with space equal to or greater than that required by federal regulations (e.g., at least 24 inches high and at least 3 or 4 square feet, depending on the size of the cat);
3. females in heat cannot be kept with males;
4. a dog or cat with a vicious or aggressive disposition must be kept separately;
5. until they are over four months old, puppies or kittens cannot be kept with adult dogs or cats, other than their dams or foster dams; and
6. a dog or cat that may have a contagious disease must be (a) isolated from, and have no nose-to-nose contact with, healthy animals and (b) examined, treated, and handled as directed by a state-licensed veterinarian.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 33 Nay 0 (03/10/2023)