

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5575

AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO REVISE

Title: MUNICIPAL ANIMAL SHELTER REGULATIONS.

Vote Date: 3/10/2023

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/15/2023

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Environment Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

To require municipal regulations to adhere to state-mandated regulations for private state-mandated shelters.

JFS Language:

Add requirement of report on inspection to be provided to ACO and CEO of municipality and adder requirement of regulations being submitted to LRRC by September 1, 2023.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Bryan Hurlburt, Commissioner, Department of Agriculture:

Commissioner Hurlburt testified that as currently drafted the bill requires municipal or regional dog pounds to maintain an indoor temperature between 55 and 80 degrees. This does not allow for exceptions depending on the species of the animal. We request flexibility for individualized needs of animals. Subsection D states that the Commissioner of Agriculture may enforce the provisions but without a reference to a penalty this would not be enforceable. DOAG requests this enforcement be addresses appropriately as in the commercial kennel regulations. The Department has drafted municipal shelter regulations and submitted them to the Office of Policy and Management for review.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Dorinda Borer, Representative, State of Connecticut:

Representative Borer submitted testimony in strong support. The primary update I am proposing is for the municipal shelter's temperature standards be updated and in alight with private shelters and our state requirements bypassing Regulations Review. In 2017 Bill 6334 was passed requiring Regulation Review make updates to private Animal Shelters but that did not get finalized until late 2021.

Karen Tracy, President, Stratford Animal Rescue Society:

Ms. Tracy works as a volunteer in the Stratford municipal shelter environment for 10 years that follows guidelines established by the Stratford Animal Control. Stratford Animal Control already has adapted every section in this bill and all animals are loving safely in our clean and temperature shelter.

Rachel Solveria, Animal Control Supervisor:

Ms. Solveria an Animal Control Officer for 26 years in two different towns has seen both new and existing facilities. Allowing animals in shelters to suffer in hot, humid or freezing conditions is inhumane. Most of our animals in shelters have already suffered from neglect, abuse and abandonment and it is our job to provide them with adequate shelter.

Jo-Anne Basile, Executive Director, Ct Votes for Animals:

Ms. Basile testified that this bill offers some needed improvements in temperature and sanitary conditions in our state animal shelters. The bill puts municipal shelters in line with other state regulated entities. These simple humane rule changes are needed now.

James Berardino, Director, Council of Small Towns:

Mr. Berardino testified that though COST supports the bill the enforcement practices are uncertain and would like a clear answer. If penalties for municipal animal shelters are precedent clarification would be appreciated. Reiteration of these enforcement policies could deter private shelters from cutting corners.

Annie Hornish, Connecticut State Director, Humane Society of the U.S.:

Ms. Hornish testified that currently regulations allow shelters to reach indoor temperatures of up to ninety degrees. Changing these regulations would normally go thru the regulatory process but the last process took 4.5 years to complete, an unacceptably long time.

Susan B. Linker, Executive Officer, Our Companions Animal Rescue:

Ms. Linker testified that the current regulations for municipal shelters date back to 1963. The bill sets reasonable minimum and maximum temperatures for shelters bringing them into line with standards for Private Animal Shelters.

Marsha Rabe, Ct. Votes for Animals:

Ms. Rabe is a volunteer for over 25 years at a municipal shelter she has seen first-hand the struggle especially in urban settings and at the bottom of the fiscal barrel. Mandating cities to be responsible is overdue.

Jill Alibrandi, Redding, Ct:

The current rules governing municipal shelters are out of date and the Department of Agriculture's hands are tied and unable to address areas of concern. Municipal shelters need be more in line with state regulated private shelters.

Kelsey Gilmore-Futeral, Legislative Attorney, Best Friends Animal Society:

Attorney Gilmore submitted an amendment that included:

Any municipal or regional dog pound shall not share the same primary enclosure except:

- A. dams or foster dams and their puppies
- B. at the discretion of shelter staff for adult dogs if they arrived at the shelter together and previously cohoused together that exhibit signs of stress when separated

Alyssa Miller-Hurley, Director Government Affairs, Pet Advocacy Network:

Ms. Miller-Hurley testified how her organization is always looking for ways to improve the standard of care for pets. The bill allows the basic standards of care safeguarding the health of the animals giving consistent regulation and uniform oversight requiring animal shelters to meet the same high standards required of other animal shelters.

Over 30 people submitted testimony in support of the bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

Date: March 20, 2023