

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-6611

AN ACT CONCERNING ON-LINE DOG LICENSES FROM THE DEPARTMENT
Title: OF AGRICULTURE.

Vote Date: 3/3/2023

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 authorize the issuance of on-line dog licenses from the Department of Agriculture in addition to the current town clerk process for receiving such licenses.

Substitute Language-LCO 5332

Changed effective date for all sections to June 1, 2024, reinstated annual licensure requirement and changed annual fee from seven to fifteen dollars.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Mike Bober, President and CEO, Pet Advocacy Network

The Pet Advocacy Network supports HB 6611 but urges members of the committee to work with the Department of Agriculture to include language that more closely aligns with the recommendations and language put forth by the Connecticut Dog License Working group.

Kate Wall, President, Connecticut Town Clerks Association

The CT Town Clerks Association supports HB 6611 because dog owners will be well serviced by moving to a statewide, online dog license portal but a date of June 1, 2024 would allow time for training for both the state and municipal employees on the new system.

John Filcak, Executive Director, Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments

NECCOG has 16 member towns and provides a range of regional services-including animal control. They support HB 6611 because on-line licenses will provide access that before now was not existed. Utilizing technology for better government just makes sense.

Tracey Hanson, First Selectman Town of Voluntown

First Selectman Hanson supports HB 6611. She is in favor of the online licensing portal but asks the committee please adhere to the language that working group submitted including pushing out the date of October 2023.

Annie Hornish, CT Senior State Director, The Humane Society of the United States

The Humane Society supports HB 6611, which would, by promoting compliance with dog licensure requirements, serve to help increase funding for the Animal Population Program but in particular The Feral Cat Grant Program, which is a hugely successful, cost-saving proactive solution that help relieve the already stretched animal care infrastructure.

Stacey Ober, Government Relations Regional Manager, New England, American Kennel Club

The American Kennel Club supports HB 6611 and welcomes a standardized system of using an online portal for licensing their pets and the flat fee for licensure but is concerned for the privacy of dog owners who may be vulnerable to theft or harassment if access to the database is not limited to those who use the information in the performance of their duties.

Francis Pickering, Executive Director, Western CT Council of Governments

West COG supports HB 6611 because it would provide an option for dog owners to obtain and renew licenses online. Such an option would improve user convenience as well as enhance municipal operations (issuance of a dog license has been found to cost more to a municipality than the license brings in in revenue).

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Michael R. Criss, First Selectman, Town of Harwinton

The Town of Harwinton opposes HB 6611 as drafted. They support the efforts to modernize the dog licensing process in order to reduce costs and create efficiencies. However, several provisions in this bill complicate the process of issuing dog licenses. Small municipalities like Harwinton cannot afford to set up separate portals or help residents in licensing their dogs for the small amount of money that we make from these licenses which is not even enough to help cover costs of animal control services.

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, CT Council of Small Towns

COST opposes HB 6611 as drafted. They support efforts to modernize the process of issuing dog licenses to reduce costs and improve efficiency but unfortunately, towns lose money on every dog tag issued, given staff and processing costs. Dog licensing fees, which have not been increased since 2003, could be updated to reflect the costs incurred by municipalities in processing licenses.

Reported by: Judith Ganswindt

Date: March 9, 2023

