
OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6303*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF ILL AND INJURED ANIMALS IN MUNICIPAL ANIMAL SHELTERS.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires a municipal or regional animal control officer (ACO) to arrange treatment for an impounded animal that is ill or injured (see BACKGROUND). It sets a timeframe for an ACO to arrange treatment and creates a system for and authorizes outside organizations to provide or arrange treatment for such an animal when a dog pound cannot afford it.

By law, a municipality may use a dog pound to shelter other animals that are injured, mistreated, or roaming in a manner that endangers the animal or the public. State regulations require a dog pound to have a licensed veterinarian examine any impounded dog that appears sick or injured (Conn. Agencies Reg. § 22-336-28).

The bill also requires the ACO, when the owner of an impounded dog or other animal is unknown, to post its photograph or description and the date on which it will be available for adoption on a national pet adoption website. If the ACO does not have the technological resources to post the information, he or she must contact an organization on the animal treatment list that the bill requires and request that it post the information and pay any related expenses. Under existing law, the ACO must post a description of such an animal in a local newspaper.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2011

ARRANGING TREATMENT FOR AN IMPOUNDED ANIMAL THAT IS ILL OR INJURED***Timing***

Under the bill, whenever an ACO observes and reasonably believes

that an impounded animal urgently needs veterinary treatment, the ACO must, within 24 hours:

1. arrange for a licensed veterinarian to treat the animal, or
2. contact one or more animal rescue organizations on an animal treatment list, which the bill requires, to request or arrange for treatment at no charge to the pound, if the pound has insufficient funds to cover treatment.

The bill requires the ACO to follow these procedures if notified by a municipal employee, member of an animal rescue organization, or municipal or regional dog pound volunteer who observes and reasonably believes an impounded animal urgently needs veterinarian treatment.

Animal Treatment List and Rescue Organizations

Under the bill, a municipal or regional ACO must maintain an animal treatment list that includes contact information from any public or private nonprofit animal rescue organization that (1) will have a licensed veterinarian treat an ill or injured animal in a municipal or regional pound without charging the pound and (2) requests to be placed on it.

Once an ACO makes contact, the bill authorizes an organization to provide or arrange treatment at no charge to the pound and keep the animal, depending on the timing of its impoundment.

ORGANIZATIONS, TIME OF IMPOUNDMENT, AND DISPOSITION

By law, when an ACO impounds an animal whose owner is unknown, he or she must (1) immediately tag the animal (or identify it by other approved means) and (2) have its description published once in the lost and found column of a newspaper having a circulation in the town where the animal was located. If its owner has not claimed the animal within seven days of the newspaper notice, the ACO may euthanize, sell, or place the animal.

Under the bill, an organization may have a licensed veterinarian of

its choice treat an ill or injured animal at its expense when an ACO contacts it, regardless of whether the seven-day period after notice has expired. If the seven-day period has expired, the bill authorizes the organization to take ownership and possession of the animal without charge.

The bill does not prevent, as required by existing law, a licensed veterinarian from mercifully killing an ill or injured animal, or disposing of it as the state veterinarian may direct, when, in the veterinarian's opinion, the animal is so ill or injured that it should be destroyed immediately.

BACKGROUND

Pounds

Each municipality, other than those participating in a regional dog pound, must:

1. provide and maintain a suitable building as a pound, which must be comfortable for the detention and care of dogs and kept in a sanitary condition, or
2. provide, through written agreement, for the detention and care of impounded dogs by a licensed veterinarian, veterinary hospital, or commercial kennel; dog pound maintained by another city; or other suitable facility approved by the agriculture commissioner.

Any municipality may use the pound or facility to shelter other animals that are injured, mistreated, or roaming in a manner that endangers the animal or the public (CGS § 22-336).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 1 (03/07/2011)