

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 11-187—sHB 5368

Environment Committee

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

**AN ACT EXTENDING CERTAIN PET SHOP LICENSEE
REQUIREMENTS TO PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT
IMPORT ANIMALS FOR ADOPTION**

SUMMARY: This act makes several changes affecting animal importers. Among other things, the act requires animal importers to (1) register with the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) commissioner; (2) have imported animals examined by a state-licensed veterinarian; and (3) notify DoAg and local zoning officials before offering the animals for sale, adoption, or transfer.

The act's registration and notice provisions do not apply to an animal importer who offers a dog or cat for sale to a licensed pet shop, if the animal is delivered directly to the pet shop.

The act establishes fines for violations.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2011

ANIMAL IMPORTER

The act defines "animal importer" as a person who brings any dog or cat into Connecticut from another sovereign entity to (1) offer it for sale, adoption, or transfer or (2) give it to anyone in exchange for a fee, sale, voluntary contribution, service, or other consideration. An animal importer includes a commercial or nonprofit animal rescue or adoption, humane relocation, or delivery organization that is not required to be licensed under state law. (By law, commercial kennels, pet shops, grooming facilities, and training facilities must be licensed by the agriculture commissioner.)

REGISTRATION

The act prohibits the importation of dogs or cats into Connecticut unless the importer registers with the DoAg commissioner and pays a \$100 fee. The registration must be on a form the commissioner prescribes and include the (1) registrant's name, mailing and business addresses, telephone number, and Internet address and (2) number of animals imported in the prior year and each animal's state or country of origin. Out-of-state residents also must include the name, Connecticut address, and telephone number of a local agent for service of process.

A registration is valid until the following December 31. An importer must renew the registration annually, if the commissioner determines the importer complies with any applicable regulation relating to the health, safety, and humane treatment of animals.

Employees or volunteers of a registered animal importer or person holding a

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commercial kennel, pet shop, grooming facility, or training facility license are not required to register if they are not otherwise animal importers.

Violators of the registration requirement are subject to a fine of up to \$500.

MISCELLANEOUS REQUIREMENTS

Event Notification

The act requires an animal importer who intends to offer a dog or cat for sale, adoption, or transfer at a public or outdoor location to notify DoAg and the appropriate municipal zoning officer at least 10 days before the event. The notice must include the event date, exact location, and expected number of animals involved. Violators are subject to a fine of up to \$100 per animal.

Agriculture Commissioner Inspection Authority

The act authorizes the DoAg commissioner to inspect an animal importer's imported animals or required records. But this inspection authority does not give the commissioner permission to enter an animal importer's residence.

Veterinarian Services and Records Required

The act requires an animal importer, within 48 hours of importing a cat or dog into Connecticut and before offering it for sale, adoption, or transfer, and every 90 days until the sale, adoption, or transfer is complete, to have a state-licensed veterinarian examine the animal. The importer cannot sell, transfer, or give an imported animal up for adoption unless a state-licensed veterinarian examined it within 15 days before the transaction and issued the animal importer a certificate attesting to the animal's good health. An animal importer who violates these provisions is subject to a fine of up to \$500 for each unexamined or uncertified animal.

The importer must maintain records of the veterinarian services for three years after they were rendered. Violators are subject to a \$500 fine.

Very Young Animals

By law, a person, firm, or corporation may not (1) import or export for sale a dog or cat under eight weeks old without its mother or (2) sell a dog or cat that is under eight weeks old. Under prior law, violators were subject to a fine of up to \$100, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both.

The act extends the prohibitions to the adoption or transfer of dogs or cats under eight weeks old. It increases the maximum fine for sales from \$100 to \$500 and applies the fine and imprisonment to adoptions and transfers. The maximum term of imprisonment remains the same.

Fine for Lack of Health Certificate

By law, a dog or cat imported into the state must be accompanied by a health certificate issued within 30 days before the importation by a licensed graduate veterinarian. The certificate must state that the animal is not diseased and, if over

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three months old, is currently vaccinated for rabies. A dog or cat from a rabies quarantine area must have the state veterinarian's permission before importation. Under prior law, violators were subject to a fine of up to \$100, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both. The act increases the fine to up to \$500. The maximum term of imprisonment remains the same.

BACKGROUND

Related Law

By law, a person obtaining a dog or cat for resale must hold a pet shop license. Violators are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment for up to 30 days, or both (CGS § 22-344e).

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