Disclaimers: The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Environment Committee
Sen. Derek Slap, 5th Senate Dist.
Rep. Tom Arnone, 58th Assembly Dist.
Rep. Travis Simms, 140th Assembly Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Municipalities may often regionalize by sharing services, such as services provided by dog pounds. Although this may be an option, Section 22-331a of the general statutes currently limit such regionalizing of dog pound services to contiguous towns with populations of less than twenty-five thousand. Even so, the cost for regionalization may still be burdensome for towns who are considered small, but whose population is greater than twenty-five thousand. Testimony shared with the committee highlighted this barrier between the towns of Burlington and Farmington. Many existing animal shelters in small towns have reached capacity, and funding is not available for expansion. The bill seeks to assist small municipalities by increasing the population threshold to fifty thousand and to remove the requirement that towns be contiguous.

Substitute Language – LCO No. 6643
Current statute requires that towns wishing to regionalize a dog pound facility are contiguous. Concerns have been shared with the committee in which neighboring towns that qualify under the population threshold could not regionalize dog pound services because they are not contiguous with other towns who also qualify. Substitute language allows these small towns to share services with other qualified towns by removing “contiguous” from the statute.
RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Submitted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Towns of Burlington and Farmington: Supports the bill. Many towns and cities are struggling because of existing facilities that do not properly service the growing population of animals in need of shelters. Councils of Government and towns across the state are trying to find more cost-effective options. The population threshold should be increased from 25,000 to 50,000 to increase the participation in municipalities to achieve cost-effective options and partnerships.

David Brensilver: The bill should include language to “explicitly ensure that adequate facilities and care are provided for the animals.”

John Filchak, Executive Director, Northeastern Connecticut Council of Government (NECCOG): NECCOG Currently operates the largest regional animal service in Connecticut serving eighteen towns across two regions. Since 2004 NECCOG has placed more than six thousand animals. NECCOG suggest that the population limit be removed and to allow any town to regionalize their animal shelter services.

Betsy Gara, Executive Director, Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST): Many shelters have reached capacity and funding is not available for expansion. COST supports the efforts of towns exploring options to facilitate voluntary, regional approaches to achieve cost savings.

Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM): Service sharing currently is hindered by both policies and practices. CCM gave example of the towns of Burlington and Farmington seeking to create a regional animal control shelter, but are unable to because of Farmington’s population size of twenty-six thousand.

Gordon Willard, Executive Director, Connecticut Humane Society: Regionalizing animal shelters provides the opportunity provides for the most basic animal sheltering practices, caring for animals more effectively and efficiently. Regionalization will allow towns with outdated kennels to place animals with state-of-the-art animal sheltering facilities.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Submitted.

Reported by: Pamela Bianca / Ussawin R. Bumpen  3/23/2019