



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 160

January Session, 2023

Substitute House Bill No. 6611

House of Representatives, March 22, 2023

The Committee on Environment reported through REP. GRESKO of the 121st Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

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

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 22-338 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective June 1, 2024*):

3 (a) Each owner or keeper of a dog of the age of six months or older,
4 except dogs kept under a kennel license as provided in section 22-342,
5 shall cause such dog to be licensed in the town clerk's office in the town
6 where such dog is kept [, on] or, in the alternative, electronically with
7 the Department of Agriculture, on or before June thirtieth, annually, or
8 at such time as such dog becomes six months old, and annually
9 thereafter, on or before June thirtieth. The owner or keeper shall pay to
10 such town clerk or the Department of Agriculture for such annual
11 license the sum of [seven] fifteen dollars for each [neutered male or
12 spayed female] dog [and the sum of twelve dollars for each unneutered
13 male dog and each unspayed female dog,] and, as applicable, one
14 additional dollar [in each case as] for the town clerk's fee for issuing a
15 tag and license as provided in section 22-340, as amended by this act.
16 [Two dollars from] Twenty-five per cent of each license fee collected for

17 a [neutered or spayed] dog shall be deposited into the animal
18 population control account, established under section 22-380g. If an
19 owner or keeper of a dog fails to procure a license as required by this
20 section, such owner or keeper shall pay the appropriate license fee
21 specified in this section, the town clerk's fee, as applicable, and a penalty
22 of one dollar for each month or fraction thereof the dog remains
23 unlicensed.

24 (b) Any owner or keeper applying for a license for a dog under
25 subsection (a) of this section, except for those owners or keepers
26 possessing a rabies vaccination exemption certificate, or a copy thereof,
27 issued pursuant to section 22-339b, shall submit to the town clerk or the
28 Department of Agriculture, as applicable, a rabies certificate signed by
29 a licensed veterinarian, or a copy thereof, stating that such dog has been
30 vaccinated against rabies, the date of the vaccination and the duration
31 of the immunity provided by the vaccine. No license shall be issued
32 unless the certificate indicates that the immunity provided by the
33 vaccine is effective at the time of licensing.

34 (c) Any owner or keeper applying for a license for a dog pursuant to
35 subsection (a) of this section that has been exempted from vaccination
36 against rabies pursuant to section 22-339b shall submit to the town clerk
37 or the Department of Agriculture, as applicable, a rabies vaccination
38 exemption certificate issued by the department, or a copy thereof, in lieu
39 of a rabies certificate.

40 (d) This section shall not apply to any dog which is imported into this
41 state for exhibition purposes and which does not remain in this state for
42 more than thirty days. Any person may import, from another state, any
43 licensed dog with collar, tag and rabies vaccination certificate, and keep
44 the same in this state for not more than thirty days, without complying
45 with the provisions of this section.

46 Sec. 2. Section 22-339 of the general statutes is repealed and the
47 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective June 1, 2024*):

48 Any person upon becoming the owner or keeper of any unlicensed

49 dog of the age of six months or older shall cause such dog to be licensed
50 within thirty days thereof until the thirtieth day of the ensuing June in
51 the manner and subject to the terms and conditions provided in section
52 22-338, as amended by this act. If the new owner has written proof of
53 purchase or transfer and the license is obtained within thirty days, [he]
54 such new owner shall not be required to pay any penalties as provided
55 by said section for failure to secure a license for a dog over six months
56 of age. Any person becoming the owner of a licensed dog shall present
57 the license and tag of such dog to the town clerk of the town in which
58 [he] such person resides and, for a fee of one dollar, such town clerk
59 shall issue, in lieu thereof, a new license and tag, which shall be recorded
60 in the name of the new owner. Such town clerk shall retain the old
61 license and tag. [in his possession.]

62 Sec. 3. Section 22-339a of the general statutes is repealed and the
63 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective June 1, 2024*):

64 (a) The town clerk of any town and the Commissioner of Agriculture,
65 as applicable, may individually or jointly deputize any employees of
66 any dog pound in such town as agents for the issuance of dog licenses
67 and tags, provided the town clerk shall be solely responsible for
68 compliance with the provisions of the statutes relating to the duties of
69 the town clerk in connection with such licenses and tags and the moneys
70 received therefor.

71 (b) Any person acquiring an unlicensed dog from a dog pound shall
72 be issued a temporary license by the town clerk or the Department of
73 Agriculture, as applicable, or [his] the town clerk's or department's
74 agent deputized pursuant to subsection (a) of this section which shall
75 expire thirty days after the issuance thereof. Prior to the expiration of a
76 temporary license, the person holding the license shall apply for a
77 license for the remainder of the license year, pay the appropriate license
78 fee specified in section 22-338, as amended by this act, and submit a
79 certificate signed by a veterinarian, or a copy or electronic copy, as
80 applicable, thereof, stating (1) that the dog has been vaccinated against
81 rabies, (2) the date of the vaccination and (3) the duration of the

82 immunity provided by the vaccine. No license shall be issued unless the
83 certificate indicates that the immunity provided by the vaccine is
84 effective at the time of licensing.

85 Sec. 4. Subsection (a) of section 22-339c of the general statutes is
86 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective June 1,*
87 *2024*):

88 (a) A certificate of rabies vaccination shall be (1) a form approved by
89 the National Association of Public Health Veterinarians, (2) any form
90 approved by the State Veterinarian, or (3) any form that has the
91 following information regarding the vaccinated animal: (A) The name
92 and address of its owner; (B) a description of the animal which specifies
93 its species, breed, age, color or markings and sex; (C) the date of the
94 vaccination, the duration of the immunity provided by the vaccination,
95 the producer of the vaccine and the vaccine serial number; (D) the rabies
96 tag number; and (E) the signature and license number of the
97 veterinarian administering the vaccination. Such certificate shall be the
98 official proof of rabies vaccination submitted to a town clerk or the
99 Department of Agriculture, as applicable, in accordance with the
100 provisions of section 22-338, as amended by this act, or 22-339a, as
101 amended by this act.

102 Sec. 5. Section 22-340 of the general statutes is repealed and the
103 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective June 1, 2024*):

104 (a) Each person complying with the provisions of section 22-338, as
105 amended by this act, 22-339, as amended by this act, or 22-342 shall
106 receive from the town clerk or the Department of Agriculture, as
107 applicable, a license on a form prescribed by the commissioner, which
108 license shall contain a description of the dog and the number under
109 which such dog is licensed. The town clerk or the Department of
110 Agriculture, as applicable, shall issue to such person a tag or plate of
111 material prescribed by the commissioner, upon which shall be distinctly
112 marked [the name of the town in which such dog is licensed,] the license
113 number and the year of license. [No town clerk shall issue such license
114 or tag to any person for any neutered male or spayed female dog not

115 previously licensed as such unless the person causing the dog to be
116 licensed exhibits to the town clerk a certificate from a licensed
117 veterinarian stating that such veterinarian has neutered or spayed the
118 dog or that, after examining the dog, he finds that the dog has been
119 neutered or spayed.]

120 (b) The town clerk shall provide for the issuance and renewal through
121 the mail of licenses issued under sections 22-338, as amended by this act,
122 and 22-339, as amended by this act. The [town clerk] Department of
123 Agriculture shall provide for the electronic issuance and renewal of
124 licenses issued by the department pursuant to sections 22-338, as
125 amended by this act, and 22-339, as amended by this act, and may make
126 information concerning the department's electronic dog licensing
127 system and applications for such licenses available at such facilities as
128 kennels, pet stores, veterinarian offices, humane society offices and pet
129 grooming establishments.

130 Sec. 6. Section 22-341 of the general statutes is repealed and the
131 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective June 1, 2024*):

132 (a) Each owner or keeper of a licensed dog shall keep around its neck
133 or body a collar or harness of leather or other suitable material, to which
134 shall be securely attached a tag or plate issued to such person by the
135 town clerk or the Department of Agriculture, as applicable. If any such
136 tag or plate is lost, the owner or keeper of such dog shall forthwith
137 secure a substitute tag or plate from the town clerk or the Department
138 of Agriculture, as applicable, at a cost of [fifty cents] one dollar.

139 (b) The town clerk of each town shall order a sufficient number of
140 such tags or plates from the commissioner, who shall furnish the same
141 at a cost of five cents each, which cost shall be paid by the town on the
142 approval of the town clerk. Any balance of the moneys received by the
143 commissioner after deducting the cost of the tags, the expenses
144 incidental to their distribution to the town clerks and the expenses
145 incidental to the enforcement of the provisions of this chapter, shall be
146 accounted for by the commissioner to the Comptroller. The design and
147 the shape of such tags or plates shall be changed each year, and such

148 tags or plates for each year shall be of uniform design and material
149 throughout the state. Any dog found roaming at large upon any public
150 highway or common or upon the premises of any person other than its
151 owner, without a tag as provided in this section, shall be presumed to
152 be an unlicensed dog.

153 Sec. 7. Section 22-345 of the general statutes, as amended by section 5
154 of public act 22-54, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
155 thereof (*Effective June 1, 2024*):

156 Any person with a disability who is the owner or keeper of a dog
157 which has been trained as a service animal, is in training to become a
158 service animal for such person, is in training to become a service animal
159 or is enrolled in a program described in section 17a-22ee shall receive a
160 license and tag for such dog from the town clerk of the town where such
161 dog is owned or kept or, electronically, from the Department of
162 Agriculture. Such license and tag shall be issued in accordance with the
163 provisions of section 22-340, as amended by this act, and no fee shall be
164 required of the owner or keeper of any such dog. [When any such dog
165 has not been previously licensed, by the town clerk to whom application
166 is being made and it is not obvious that the dog is a service animal, such
167 town clerk may inquire of such owner or keeper whether the dog is a
168 service animal required because of a disability and what work or task
169 the dog has been trained to perform.] Any person who has a dog placed
170 with such person temporarily, including for breeding purposes, by a
171 nonprofit organization established for the purpose of training or
172 educating the dog as a service animal shall receive a license and tag for
173 such dog from the town clerk of the town where such dog is kept or the
174 Department of Agriculture, as applicable. Such license and tag shall be
175 issued in accordance with the provisions of section 22-340, as amended
176 by this act, and no fee shall be required for such license and tag,
177 provided such person [presents confirmation] confirms that such dog
178 was placed with such person by such organization. As used in this
179 section, (1) "disability" means any one or more of the following, as
180 defined in section 46a-51: (A) An intellectual disability, (B) physically
181 disabled, (C) a mental disability, or (D) a learning disability; and (2)

182 "service animal" has the same meaning as provided in 28 CFR 35.104, as
183 amended from time to time, and includes a service animal in training.

184 Sec. 8. Section 22-347 of the general statutes is repealed and the
185 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective June 1, 2024*):

186 (a) Within thirty days after receipt of the fees for dog licenses and
187 tags, each town clerk shall deduct one dollar for each dog licensed, two
188 dollars for each kennel license issued and fifty cents for each
189 replacement tag issued and pay the balance to the town treasurer or
190 other proper fiscal officer. Each town treasurer or fiscal officer, as the
191 case may be, shall keep a separate dog fund account of all fees received
192 from the town clerk, and all receipts from the municipal animal control
193 officer and expended by said officer under the provisions of this chapter,
194 and shall pay to the Commissioner of Agriculture, on September first of
195 each year, fifty per cent of all moneys received from the sale of licenses
196 prior to July first, or forty per cent of all such moneys if the town has
197 made a survey of unlicensed dogs in accordance with the provisions of
198 section 22-349, as amended by this act, and include with such payment
199 a statement of the number of licenses issued during such year. All
200 moneys received from licenses sold after June thirtieth and all moneys
201 received from the municipal animal control officer [and all license fees
202 returned to the town by the State Treasurer, at the request of the
203 commissioner, under the provisions of section 22-348] shall be kept by
204 the town treasurer or other fiscal officer in the separate dog fund
205 account. The town treasurer or other fiscal officer shall, on the ensuing
206 September first, send fifty per cent, or forty per cent as the case may be,
207 of all license fees in such account to the commissioner, including any
208 penalty fees collected pursuant to section 22-338, as amended by this act.
209 All payments to the commissioner shall be accompanied by an account
210 thereof in a form prescribed by the commissioner and a copy of such
211 account shall be sent to the commissioner. Upon the failure of any town
212 treasurer or other fiscal officer to pay any amount due pursuant to this
213 section, or any portion thereof, within forty-five days from its due date,
214 the commissioner shall add interest of one and one-fourth per cent per
215 month or fraction thereof on the amount unpaid per month or fraction

216 thereof from the due date of such payment to the date of payment and
217 a penalty in the amount of ten per cent of the amount unpaid or fifty
218 dollars, whichever is greater. All funds in the dog fund account, except
219 such funds as are to be sent to the commissioner, shall be used only for
220 the compensation of municipal animal control officers, license
221 certificates, tags, the construction and maintenance of dog pounds, the
222 detention and care of impounded dogs in accordance with section 22-
223 336, municipal animal control officer's equipment, dog supplies and
224 such veterinary fees as are provided for by law or regulations and shall
225 not be used for any other purpose except upon written approval of the
226 commissioner. No fees paid into the treasury of the town for tags or
227 licenses for dogs shall be paid back to the persons from whom they were
228 collected.

229 (b) The Commissioner of Agriculture shall, not later than thirty days
230 after the Department of Agriculture's electronic receipt of fees for dog
231 licenses and tags, remit to each town clerk twenty-five per cent of each
232 license fee paid electronically to the department for each dog licensed
233 within such town. The Commissioner of Agriculture shall keep a
234 separate dog licensing fee account consisting of all fees received and
235 expended by the commissioner in accordance with the provisions of this
236 chapter.

237 Sec. 9. Section 22-349 of the general statutes is repealed and the
238 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective June 1, 2024*):

239 The town clerk of each town and the Department of Agriculture shall,
240 annually, on or before July first, provide the municipal animal control
241 officer or regional animal control officer of each town with a copy of
242 each dog license issued in such town by such clerk or department. Such
243 municipal animal control officer or regional animal control officer shall
244 thereupon make diligent search for any unlicensed dog required to be
245 licensed by section 22-338, as amended by this act. The commissioner
246 [shall] may adopt regulations in accordance with the provisions of
247 chapter 54 establishing procedures for such search. If the owner of any
248 such unlicensed dog is not known, the municipal animal control officer

249 or regional animal control officer shall impound such dog. The owning
 250 or keeping of an unlicensed or impounded dog and the failure to
 251 purchase a license and pay the advertising and redemption fee within
 252 one hundred and twenty hours from the time the dog was impounded
 253 shall be an infraction.

254 Sec. 10. (NEW) (*Effective June 1, 2024*) The Commissioner of
 255 Agriculture shall create an electronic dog licensing form to be used by
 256 the Department of Agriculture to electronically process dog licenses
 257 pursuant to chapter 435 of the general statutes. Such form shall be in
 258 addition to the standard form created by the commissioner pursuant to
 259 section 22-380g of the general statutes. The commissioner shall
 260 distribute information about such electronic form to veterinarians and
 261 the operators of pet shops, pet grooming facilities, municipal pounds or
 262 dog training facilities who voluntarily agree to make such information
 263 available for the convenience of dog owners.

264 Sec. 11. Sections 22-9, 22-348, 22-352 and 22-380l of the general
 265 statutes are repealed. (*Effective June 1, 2024*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>June 1, 2024</i>	22-338
Sec. 2	<i>June 1, 2024</i>	22-339
Sec. 3	<i>June 1, 2024</i>	22-339a
Sec. 4	<i>June 1, 2024</i>	22-339c(a)
Sec. 5	<i>June 1, 2024</i>	22-340
Sec. 6	<i>June 1, 2024</i>	22-341
Sec. 7	<i>June 1, 2024</i>	22-345
Sec. 8	<i>June 1, 2024</i>	22-347
Sec. 9	<i>June 1, 2024</i>	22-349
Sec. 10	<i>June 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 11	<i>June 1, 2024</i>	Repealer section

ENV Joint Favorable Subst.

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Department of Agriculture	Animal Population Control Account - Revenue Gain	See Below	See Below
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Revenue Gain	See Below	See Below
Department of Agriculture	GF - Cost	90,000	91,250
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	21,410	21,945

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Various Municipalities	Revenue Gain	See Below	See Below

Explanation

The bill requires the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) to provide and operate a new online dog licensing portal as an option for licensing dogs while leaving intact current law allowing residents to license dogs with town clerks, which results in fiscal impacts described below, beginning in FY 24. The bill also makes changes to various dog license fees and how those revenues are handled, which will result in a revenue gain to various entities beginning in FY 24.

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 42.82% of payroll in FY 24.

The bill would result in a cost to the state of at least \$111,410 in FY 24 and \$113,195 in FY 25 for the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) to hire a processing technician but would be offset by a gain in revenue associated with both the increase in certain fees and an expected rise in the number of licensed dogs, since availability of an online system is expected to increase accessibility.

Costs to DoAg include: (1) staff costs of \$50,000 in FY 24 and \$51,250 in FY 25 to hire a new Processing Technician to review process dog licenses in the new system, review, and process applications in the Animal Population Control Program and troubleshoot e-portal user issues; and (2) associated expenses of \$40,000 annually for marketing for the online system and ongoing program supplies and maintenance. There would also be costs to the Office of the State Comptroller of \$21,410 in FY 24 and \$21,945 in FY 25 associated with the new position. There are also significant startup costs to the state associated with the new system.

The bill additionally is expected to result in an annual revenue gain to the General Fund, the animal population control account (APCA) administered by DoAg, and municipalities for three reasons. First, the availability of an online portal could increase the rate of compliance for dog licensing. Second, the bill increases the dog license fee, from either \$7 for fixed dogs and \$12 for an unneutered or unspayed dog, to \$15 per dog regardless of sterilization status (an increase of \$8 per fixed dog and \$3 for others). Third, there is a change to the APCA described below. The amount of revenue gain to all sources depends on the number of dogs that are licensed.

The average number of annual licenses over the past ten years has been approximately 210,000 dogs. It is expected that with increased availability of dog licensing, the total number of licensed dogs may increase but the scale of the increase is unknown.

The bill increases, from \$2 to \$3.75, the amount of the license fee that is deposited into the animal population control account (APCA) administered by DoAg. This increase would result in a revenue gain to

the APCA depending on the number of dogs licensed. The account funds the Animal Population Control Program, which offers reduced cost sterilization and vaccination services for certain dogs and cats. The balance in the APCA is currently \$737,669.

By law, dog owners must keep on each dog's collar or harness a license tag, which they receive when licensing their dogs. The bill increases the fee for a replacement dog tag from \$0.50 to \$1. This is anticipated to result in a minimal revenue gain to municipalities, depending on the number of duplicate dog licenses issued and the cost of the tags.

The bill makes other minor changes that have no fiscal impact.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to changes in state employee salary and wages, and the number of dogs licensed through the new portal.

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6611

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

SUMMARY

Beginning June 1, 2024, this bill requires the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) to operate a statewide, online dog licensing portal as an option for residents to use for initial and renewal dog licensure. As under existing law, dog owners may still license their dogs with their respective town clerks and must still submit proof of rabies vaccination. By law, town clerks may also deputize dog pound employees to issue dog licenses and tags. The bill similarly lets the DoAg commissioner do the same, individually or jointly with the town clerk.

The bill sets the annual dog license fee at \$15 per dog regardless of sterilization status. Current law sets the fee at \$7 for a neutered male or spayed female dog and \$12 for an unneutered male or unspayed female dog (plus a \$6 surcharge for an unneutered or unspayed dog, which the bill eliminates, as described below). By law, unchanged by the bill, an additional \$1 is charged when the town clerk issues a license and tag. Also by law, unchanged by the bill, a person with a disability may receive a free dog license for a service animal. If a dog has not been previously licensed, current law allows the town clerk to ask if the dog is a service animal and what the work is the dog is trained to do. The bill eliminates this provision.

Under the bill, 25% of the license fee collected for any dog must be deposited in the animal population control account, rather than \$2 for each neutered or spayed dog as under current law. The account funds the Animal Population Control Program, which offers reduced cost sterilization and vaccination services for certain dogs and cats.

By law, dog owners must keep on each dog's collar or harness a license tag, which they receive when licensing their dogs. The bill increases the fee for a replacement dog tag from \$0.50 to \$1. It also removes a requirement that the tag include the issuing municipality's name. Under the bill, a dog owner no longer needs to relicense a dog when they move to a new municipality.

The bill requires the DoAg commissioner to remit to each town clerk 25% of license and tag fees paid through the electronic online portal for a dog licensed in the clerk's respective municipality. He must do this within 30 days after being paid for licenses and tags. The commissioner must keep a separate dog licensing fee account for receiving and dispersing fees. By law, unchanged by the bill, municipalities must keep an accounting of license and tag fees collected and remit a portion to DoAg on September 1 annually. The law requires the municipalities to use their dog fund accounts to pay for things like animal control officers (ACOs), licenses and tags, dog pounds, and the care of impounded dogs.

Under the bill, the commissioner must create an electronic dog licensing form so that DoAg can electronically process dog licenses. He must distribute information about the electronic form to veterinarians and operators of pet shops, pet grooming facilities, municipal pounds, or dog training facilities who volunteer to make the information available to customers.

The bill requires DoAg, in addition to the town clerks under current law, to give the applicable municipal or regional ACO, by July 1 annually, a copy of each dog license issued in the respective municipality or region so that the ACO may search for unlicensed dogs. The bill allows, rather than requires, the DoAg commissioner to adopt regulations on ACO search procedures.

The bill also repeals various statutes and makes other minor, technical, and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 1, 2024

REPEALED STATUTES

The bill repeals the following statutes:

1. CGS § 22-9, which requires the DoAg commissioner to have control over state-owned institutional farms, except those of UConn and the state agricultural experiment station;
2. CGS § 22-348, which allocates a portion of dog license fees (\$0.10 per license) to UConn for canine disease research;
3. CGS § 22-352, which requires a dog owner who moves to a different municipality during the year to request a replacement dog tag from the new municipality for a \$0.50 fee; and
4. CGS § 22-380l, which adds to the unneutered or unspayed dog licensing fee a \$6 surcharge, which currently goes to the animal population control account.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 21 Nay 11 (03/03/2023)