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## **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)