

Environment Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5223

AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO AGRICULTURE RELATED

Title: STATUTES.

Vote Date: 3/8/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/28/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Environment Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

The Department of Agriculture has oversight over many areas concerning agriculture. Previous laws may sometimes need clarification to fix grammatical mistakes and to streamline processes. The change to sections 2, 4, and 5 are technical corrections seeking to clarify the law and correct mistakes. The change in section 3 seeks to optimize the current sterilization process to help facilitate faster adoptions by allowing preemptive action by municipalities. The change to section 6 reflects an unnecessary qualification being eliminated due to the current Apiary Inspector being of a lower position and still being capable of their duties. Finally, section 7 seeks to expedite the Milk Board confirmation process because it is the Department's belief that individuals would be better served through a different confirmation process.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:

The substitute language eliminates section 1 of the bill concerning the definition of animal.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Bryan Hurlburt, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Agriculture

The Commissioner provides the following summary of the original bill. It allows additional utilization of the Animal Population Control Program, as well as amending the qualifications of the State Entomologist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station to be reflective of the needs of the position.

Section 1 amends the definition of animal to state the department's purview and mission more clearly, which revolves around farm animals, domestic animals, and animals offered for sale by pet shops.

Section 2 revises kennel licensing to be reflective of changes that were made in Public Act 23-187, revising the name of the license to local kennel and amending the number of litters triggering the need to obtain a license.

Section 3 allows municipalities to utilize the state-issued spay/neuter vouchers offered under the Animal Population Control Program, on animals prior to their adoptions.

Section 4 and 5 defines Coggins test and fixes a grammatical error.

Section 6 comes at the request of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station to amend the minimum qualifications for an Apiary Inspector.

Section 7 removes the legislative confirmation requirement for members of the Milk Regulation Board.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Joan Nichols, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau

The Farm Bureau supports the minor technical revisions to existing statutes submitted by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

Jason White, Director, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

The Director requests the removal of proposed job title and qualifications for the Apiary Inspector.

Mary La Sala

The testifier expressed support for the bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Representative Nicole Klarides-Ditria, 150th District

As the Co-Chair of the Animal Welfare Caucus, the Representative feels protections from cruelty for feral cats, and other animals that are not obtained in pet shops or places where they are selectively bred in captivity, stand vulnerable under this bill as it is originally written.

Mary Bylone

The testifier expresses the belief that the bill will negatively impact their ability to hire out-of-state dog groomers, as they would be required to obtain a license, and the local ramifications of disincentivizing local dog communications.

Andrea Dobras, Board Member, CT for Animals Education Fund

The Fund oppose section one of this bill where it redefines animals to only include those who are selectively bred in captivity and those who live in close association with humans. It also future narrows the definition for animals for amphibians, fish, and reptiles to only those who are offered for sale by a pet shop or which there is certification of captive breeding.

Sara Futh

The testifier expresses the belief that grooming dogs using a trailer is common practice and not undesirable.

Annie Hornish, Connecticut State Director, The Humane Society of the United States

The Humane Society opposes the redefinition of the term "animal" for several reasons. They state that this bill creates statutory confusion with regards to the enforcement and intent of cruelty laws. Secondly, it is their belief that the change in lines 9-10, which removes a list of species from protection unless they were "offer for sale by pet shop for which there is a certification of captive breeding", will conflict with existing statute that mandates that Animal Control Officers be trained in handling nuisance wildlife. Finally, it is their belief that such redefinition may significantly weaken Connecticut's' cross reporting law.

Dr. James Lombella, President/Executive Director, CT Votes for Animals

CT Votes for animals finds problems with the definition in section 1, as redefining "animal" in the bill can lead to confusion as to "animal" in other statutory sections, which can only serve to impede services to those animals the statutes were meant to protect.

Stacey Ober, J.D., Government Relations, Regional Manager New England, American Kennel Club

The American Kennel Club would amend the legal definition of "grooming facility" to include those doing business in "any vehicle or trailer". While this wording may be intended to include mobile grooming services offered to Connecticut's pet owners, it would also encompass professional show dog handlers, who travel in RVs or with travel trailers to exhibit at competitive events.

Laura Simon, President, Connecticut Wildlife Rehabilitators Association

The Association's main objection is the change in the definition of "animal". It is their belief that this creates confusion as to which sections of the cruelty statutes apply to domestic animals and which to wildlife and can have a detrimental impact. Making the definition of "animal" only apply to domestic animals and pets in one section, but not another, will create interpretation confusion and cause enforcement problems.

Sanford Woodard

The testifier expresses the belief that it would not make sense for individuals crossing the state borders to require licensing.

The following also expressed concern at the proposal to require dog grooming licenses:

Kara Trojanoski; Carol Phelps; Jean Stauning; Anonymous 4; Jane Goodell; Netsy Schwartz; Robert Brigham; Wendy Davis; Grace Hallock; Janet McLaughlin; Daniel Gelb;

The following expressed opposition to the bill, with many stating opposition to section 1 of the original language of the bill:

Dr. Shirley McCarthy; Ava Fiore, Maizie Ogren; Laura Lynch; Andrea Dobras; Roberta Helling; Lisa Mingione; Jamila Viandier; Jeffrey Atwood; Wendy Horowitz; Sally Bovino; Monica Cotton; Sheriden Franklin; Julie Stankiewicz; Val Maloney; Ronaldo DeGray; Bonnie Margolis; Mark Brault; Anonymous 1; Melissa Leonard; Cornelia and Russ Fortiert; Jeanne Martin; Stephanie Gatto; Kacey Constable; Chris Kerin; Andrea Barlow; Anne Mazzone; G Simmons; Joan Mccoy; Ingrid Casas; Wendy Ruggeri; Deb Sutfin; Anonymous 2; Anonymous 3; Holly Quintiliano; Barbara Kil; Laurie Goodman; Julianne Farnham; Sally Westcott; Lisa Haut; Sam Edwards; Joanne Huber; Robert Hallock; Phillip Sobask; Julie Lewin; Jane Ciarlone; Debra Bologna; Danielle Crocker; Linda Pleva; Susan King; Sherry Wernicke; Elizabeth Quattrochi; Wendy Shanahan; Glauca Lolli; Anonymous 5; Mandy Wieting; Peter Herrmann; Dorothy Rich; Valerie Charbonneau; Tom Tierney; Jill Alibrandi; Cathy Popp; Alison Zyla; Katherine Stapp; Lisa Mentes; Hope Maruzo; Laura Boyd; Catherine Foley; Paula Snedeker; Valerie Woodruff; Lisa Tobias; Sheryl Pierson; Kirsta MacLellan; Keeley Mangeno; Barbara Biel; Elizabeth Kiernan; Andrea Kerin; Bonnie West; Christine Kaminski; Albert Rabinovich; Karen Laski; Kelly Marchwinski; Regina Milano; Kate Marchwinski; Laura Simon; Marlene Wilhelm; Susan Linker

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

Date: 3/19/2024