

CDF Legislative Report - 2011 Activity

Hello All,

This year's regular legislative session of the General Assembly adjourned on June 8. Of the thirty-five dog-related bills that were introduced into committees, four survived the legislative process and were signed into law by Governor Malloy:

H.B. 5008 (Public Act 11-182) An Act Concerning the Quarantine of Biting Guide Dogs. Signed on July 13; effective date October 1. This act exempts a guide dog owned or in the custody and control of a blind person, or a person with a mobility impairment, from quarantine requirements when it bites or attacks an individual, provided that the dog is currently vaccinated and is subject to routine veterinary care.

H.B. 5368 (Public Act 11-187) An Act Extending Certain Pet Shop Licensing Requirements to Persons and Organizations that Import Animals for Adoption. Signed on July 13; effective date October 1. This act establishes, for the first time, licensure requirements for persons and organizations that engage in the business of importing animals into the state for adoption, sale or transfer. "Business" applies whether the activities are for-profit or not-for-profit. Animal importers that offer animals to pet shops licensed in accordance with existing statutes will not be affected.

Apprehension has been expressed by some CDF members regarding this bill. If the state Dept. of Agriculture decides that it applies to activities by dog club rescue groups, it would be a stretch that "this bill would make it unaffordable for rescue groups to sell rescue animals, even as a donation" as stated by one member. These are the new requirements:

1. \$100.00 per year to register the rescue organization.
2. Disclosure of all animals imported from out-of-state sources during the prior year, with the state or country of origin reported for each animal (this information must be included in the application to register).
3. Within 48 hours of importing an animal, and every 90 days thereafter until it is adopted, sold or transferred, have the animal examined by a state licensed veterinarian. An examination by a state licensed veterinarian will be required not more than 15 days prior to adoption, sale or transfer of the animal (the 48-hour or 90-day examination will satisfy this requirement if it falls within the 15 days).
4. Records of veterinary services will be required to be retained for three years.
5. The existing statutory requirement for providing a certificate of health (and current rabies vaccination if three months of age or older) for an animal imported for sale will be expanded to include those imported for adoption or transfer.

The only significant costs possibly imposed by this legislation will be the annual registration fee and the additional veterinarian examinations required. Reputable rescue

groups already have veterinary examinations for animals as they are received, and they maintain records of those costs.

It does not appear that the additional costs to a reputable dog club or rescue organization (registration and veterinarian fees) will cause a significant hardship. It will be worth those costs to give the Dept of Agriculture some teeth for attacking the present deplorable importation of dogs with undisclosed diseases and physical ailments to the detriment of state residents and animals.

Four representatives and seven senators joined Rep. Brian Hurlburt as co-sponsors of this bill. The House vote was 143 Yea, 2 Nay; the Senate vote was 36 Yea, 0 Nay.

H.B. 6226 (Public Act 11-194) An Act Concerning Cross-Reporting of Child Abuse and Animal Cruelty. Signed on July 13; effective date October 1. This act requires the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to share/exchange information reported by animal control officers and employees of the DCF pertaining to an animal that has been harmed, neglected or treated cruelly in the course of their investigations. It also provides for: 1) the training of DCF employees concerning the identification of harm, neglect and cruelty toward animals and the relationship of such to child welfare case practice, and 2) the training of ACOs concerning the accurate and prompt identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect.

H.B. 6303 (Public Act 11-111) An Act Concerning the Treatment of Ill and Injured Animals in Municipal Animal Shelters. Signed on July 8; effective date October 1. This act permits a municipal or regional dog pound to enter into a contract with one or more public or private animal rescue organizations for payment by such organization(s) for treatment by a licensed veterinarian of injured, sick or diseased animals impounded at that facility. The contract must provide that no costs associated with that treatment will accrue to the municipality or region. The ACO in charge will be required to notify the contracted organization(s) of the need for treatment as determined by him or notification of such need by another municipal employee or volunteer. The contracted organization will have twenty-four hours after notification to provide treatment by a licensed veterinarian of its choice.

The existing requirement for advertising of unidentified animals in local newspapers will be changed to allow advertising also in newspapers with state-wide circulation. A requirement has been added that a photograph or description of an animal and its termination date for legal impoundment be posted on a national pet finder web site or a web site maintained by the ACO and accessible to the public through an Internet search.

Ralph Slater
CDF Legislative Liaison