



PA 23-138—sHB 5575

Environment Committee

Planning and Development Committee

AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO REVISE MUNICIPAL ANIMAL SHELTER REGULATIONS

SUMMARY: This act requires that municipal or regional dog pounds have mechanical heating and cooling systems that can maintain an indoor ambient temperature of between 55 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit, unless a state-licensed veterinarian requires other temperatures for medical reasons. It also places rules on how these dog pounds keep dogs and cats (see below) and authorizes the agriculture commissioner to enforce them.

By law, the commissioner may inspect dog pounds and other facilities where domestic animals are kept and issue orders to correct any deficiencies found. The act requires the commissioner to give municipal animal control officers (ACOs) an inspection report with findings within five days after an inspection. The ACO must give a copy of the report to the municipality's chief elected official and police department or ACO supervisor within 30 days after receiving it.

Lastly, the act requires the commissioner to submit any revised regulations for municipal dog pounds that are in process as of the act's passage (June 26, 2023) to the Regulation Review Committee by September 1, 2023. (By law, he may adopt regulations on the construction and maintenance of dog pounds or other facilities where domestic animals are kept.)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except the provisions setting out rules for municipal or regional dog pounds are effective October 1, 2023.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MUNICIPAL OR REGIONAL DOG POUNDS

In addition to the air temperature requirement, the act sets the following rules for municipal or regional dog pounds:

1. dogs cannot share the same primary enclosure, except dams (i.e., mothers) or foster dams and their puppies;
2. primary enclosures must be provided for each cat with space equal to or greater than federal regulations require (e.g., at least 24 inches high and at least three or four square feet, depending on the size of the cat);
3. females in heat cannot be kept with males;
4. a dog or cat with a vicious or aggressive disposition must be kept separately;
5. until they are over four months old, puppies or kittens cannot be kept with adult dogs or cats, other than their dams or foster dams; and
6. a dog or cat that may have a contagious disease must be (a) isolated from, and have no nose-to-nose contact with, healthy animals and (b) examined, treated, and handled as directed by a state-licensed veterinarian.

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY