



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE  
**Joint Fiscal Office**

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**Fiscal Note**

March 20, 2024

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**H.626 – An act relating to animal welfare**

**As recommended by the House Committee on Ways and Means, Draft 1.1**

**Bill Summary**

This bill would create a Division of Animal Welfare within the Department of Public Safety (DPS). The Division would be staffed by a single employee – a Director of Animal Welfare. The Director would be responsible for developing a plan for the development, implementation, and enforcement of animal welfare laws. The Director would also consult with State agencies that respond to animal welfare complaints. The Animal Welfare Fund would be created to fund the expenses of the Division. The fund would receive the proceeds of a \$2 surcharge placed on town dog or wolf-hybrid licenses.

**Fiscal Impact**

The Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) estimates the bill would raise an additional \$140,000 of annual revenue through the \$2 surcharge on dog and wolf-hybrid licenses. These funds would flow to the newly created Animal Welfare Fund to support the costs of the director position. These funds are additional to the \$1 license fee that is currently allocated to the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Commissioner of Health, and the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for rabies control. This fee has not been changed since its initial enactment in 1994.

|   | Current Law Allocations – \$1 License Fee | Revenue – Current Law (FY 2022) | Proposed Allocations - \$2 License Fee | Estimated Revenue As Proposed in H.626 (FY 2025) |
|---|---|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Department of Fish and Wildlife         | 45%                                       | \$29,940                        | 14.85%                                 | \$31,500   |
| Commissioner of Health                  | 45%                                       | \$29,940                        | 14.85%                                 | \$31,500   |
| Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets | 10%                                       | \$6,653                         | 3.3%                                   | \$7,000  |
| DPS Division of Animal Welfare          | --  | -                               | 67%                                    | \$140,000  |
| <b>Total</b>                            |   | <b>\$66,533</b>                 |  | <b>\$210,000</b>                                 |