

1 H.504

2 Introduced by Representative Shaw of Pittsford

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Public safety; agriculture; animal welfare; animal cruelty;  
6 enforcement

7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require the  
8 Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets to submit to the General Assembly  
9 a report regarding the reorganization, enhancement, and enforcement of animal  
10 welfare requirements in the State, including the establishment of an animal  
11 welfare division at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

12 An act relating to the reorganization, enhancement, and enforcement of  
13 animal welfare requirements in the State

14 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

15 Sec. 1. REPORT ON THE REORGANIZATION, ENHANCEMENT, AND  
16 ENFORCEMENT OF ANIMAL WELFARE REQUIREMENTS IN  
17 THE STATE

18 (a) On or before January 15, 2023, the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and  
19 Markets shall submit to the House Committees on Agriculture and Forestry, on  
20 Judiciary, on Ways and Means, and on Appropriations and the Senate

1 Committees on Agriculture, on Judiciary, on Finance, and on Appropriations a  
2 report addressing the reorganization, enhancement, and enforcement of animal  
3 welfare requirements in the State.

4 (b) The report required under subsection (a) of this section shall:

5 (1) Summarize existing animal welfare requirements in the State,  
6 including the entity or entities responsible for enforcement of each  
7 requirement.

8 (2) Compare Vermont's animal welfare requirements to similar  
9 requirements or animal welfare programs in other states in New England, with  
10 a focus on the Animal Welfare Act in Maine.

11 (3) Include draft legislation consolidating or enhancing the animal  
12 welfare requirements in Vermont so that animal welfare regulation in the State  
13 is consistent with or exceeds animal welfare requirements or programs in other  
14 New England states. The draft legislation shall:

15 (A) establish an animal welfare division at the Agency of  
16 Agriculture, Food and Markets to oversee and enforce a coordinated animal  
17 welfare program for the State;

18 (B) define what constitutes adequate shelter, adequate food, and  
19 adequate water for all domestic pets and livestock;

20 (C) address whether animal cruelty requirements should continue to  
21 be characterized as a crime enforceable by any law enforcement officer in the

1 State or whether enforcement of animal cruelty requirements, including  
2 adequate food, water, and shelter requirements for domestic pets and livestock,  
3 should be the jurisdiction of the animal welfare division at the Agency of  
4 Agriculture, Food and Markets;

5 (D) propose how domestic pets and kennels shall be licensed in the  
6 State, including:

7 (i) proposed fees for domestic pet licenses;

8 (ii) how revenue from license fees shall be used;

9 (iii) whether municipalities will retain any license fee revenue;

10 and

11 (iv) whether any license fee revenue shall be used for programs to  
12 provide low-cost spaying and neutering services for domestic pets;

13 (E) propose revisions to current statutes addressing animals running  
14 at large or causing damage, including modernized penalties for such offenses;

15 and

16 (F) identify current statutes or programs that should be repealed if the  
17 draft legislation is enacted.

18 (4) Summarize the potential budgetary and revenue effects of the draft  
19 legislation proposed under subdivision (3) of this subsection, including:

20 (A) the proposed appropriations necessary to establish an animal  
21 welfare division at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, including the

1 number of full-time employees necessary to run the division and the estimated  
2 annual budget of the division once established; and

3 (B) the revenue impact on municipalities from the proposed licensing  
4 of domestic pets and kennels.

5 (5) Propose funding or funding sources to support an animal welfare  
6 division at the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and to support  
7 implementation of the draft legislation proposed under subdivision (3) of this  
8 subsection.

9 (c) The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall consult with and  
10 solicit public comments from interested stakeholders in the development of the  
11 recommendations and draft legislation required under subsection (b) of this  
12 section.

13 Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

14 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.