



VERMONT LEGISLATIVE
Joint Fiscal Office

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Fiscal Note

May 8, 2024

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H.626 – An act relating to animal welfare

As passed by the House of Representatives

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 Surcharge	Revenue – Current Law (FY 2022)	Proposed Allocations - \$3 License Fee Surcharge	Estimated Annual Revenue As Proposed in H.626*
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
Total		\$66,533		\$210,000

*Since the bill would be effective January 1, 2025, the first full year of revenue would begin in FY 2026. Estimated revenues for FY25 are approximately 50% of the total in this column.