

Subject Pets and companion animals

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Overview

This bill would create a new 13-member state board to protect and promote companion animal welfare; assume the regulation of certain entities; and educate and assist the public, nonprofits, and local units of government. The bill would also establish a special companion animal license plate, with a portion of the proceeds allocated to the new board.

The new Companion Animal Board would assume responsibility for regulating dog and cat kennels, dealers, and commercial breeders. By law, these responsibilities are currently under the jurisdiction of the state Board of Animal Health. The Board of Animal Health would retain jurisdiction over the health of livestock and other farm animals, as well as the control and prevention of dangerous and reportable diseases of all domesticated animals.

The bill would also grant rulemaking authority to the Companion Animal Board and require consultation and cooperation between the Companion Animal Board and the Board of Animal Health.

Article 1: Companion Animal Board

This article establishes a new Companion Animal Board along with its purpose, structure, duties, powers, and funding. It also transfers responsibility for regulating dog and cat kennels, dealers, and commercial breeders from the Board of Animal Health to the new board.

Section Description – Article 1: Companion Animal Board

1 Definitions.

Defines key terms for purposes of the new board. Defines “companion animal” by reference to existing definitions in the Pet and Companion Animal Welfare Act and state laws that prohibit animal cruelty. For purposes of the new board, “companion animal” would effectively mean any animal owned, possessed, cared for, or

Section Description – Article 1: Companion Animal Board

controlled by a person for the present or future enjoyment of that person or another as a pet or companion animal, including stray pets and companion animals.

2 Companion animal board; purpose.

Establishes the new board and its purpose—serving the broader community while protecting and promoting the welfare, social well-being, and physical and mental health of companion animals. Specifies that the board’s statutes do not apply to farm or other agricultural animals, and that the Board of Animal Health has authority to control and prevent dangerous and reportable companion animal diseases.

3 Board structure.

Establishes a 13-member board, appointed by the governor, and specifies that board members must have certain qualifications. Requires the board to appoint an executive director and meet at least quarterly. Board member terms, compensation, and other matters would be governed by a standard set of board procedures in current law.

4 Duties of board.

Requires the board to assume two areas of responsibility currently under the Board of Animal Health’s jurisdiction: the licensing and inspection of certain dog and cat kennels and dealers, and the licensing and inspection of commercial dog and cat breeders. Requires the board to perform other specified education and communication duties and authorizes the board to award grants to support nonprofits, local governments, veterinarians, and postsecondary institutions with missions or programs targeting companion animal welfare or the human-animal bond.

Effective date: This section would be effective July 1, 2023.

5 Authority of board; reports.

Grants the board rulemaking authority. Authorizes the board to create an advisory task force with certain qualifications. Requires the board to publish an annual report. Requires the Board of Animal Health to provide the board a copy of each new certificate of veterinary inspection for a companion animal.

Effective date: This section would be effective July 1, 2023.

6 Funds received from other sources; gifts.

Authorizes the board to apply for and accept gifts, grants, and contributions from any source.

Section Description – Article 1: Companion Animal Board

- 7 Companion animal account; appropriation.**
Establishes a dedicated account in the special revenue fund. Requires the board to deposit all fees, penalties, gifts, and grants in this account and appropriates the proceeds to the board to administer specified statutes in this article.
- 8 Transfer of duties.**
Transfers oversight of dog and cat kennels, dealers, and commercial breeders from the Board of Animal Health to the new board.
Effective date: This section would be effective July 1, 2023.
- 9 Revisor instruction.**
Requires the Revisor of Statutes to update statutes as required to implement the transfer of duties required under the previous section.
- 10 Rulemaking authority.**
Requires the board to make conforming changes to relevant Minnesota Rules and authorizes the board to use an expedited rulemaking process for this purpose.
Effective date: This section would be effective July 1, 2023.
- 11 Appropriation; companion animal board.**
Appropriates money from the general fund to the new board and establishes a base funding level for future fiscal years.
- 12 Effective date.**
Unless otherwise specified above, the sections in this article would take effect July 1, 2022.

Article 2: Companion Animal Plates

This article establishes a special Minnesota companion animal license plate designed by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety in consultation with the new Companion Animal Board. Each motorist's annual contribution of at least \$30 would be deposited in the board's dedicated account established under article 1.

Article 3: Board of Animal Health Changes

This article authorizes the new Companion Animal Board's executive director to serve as a nonvoting consultant to the Board of Animal Health, requires the Companion Animal Board to

defer to the Board of Animal Health regarding the control and prevention of reportable diseases affecting commercial dog and cat breeders, and requires the Companion Animal Board to immediately report disease-related testing of commercial dog and cat breeders to the Board of Animal Health.



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