

# New England State Issues August 2021

By [AKC Government Relations](#)

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## News from the New England State Capitols

**Connecticut** – Deputy Speaker Mushinsky is planning to convene a workgroup in September regarding legislation for therapy dog recognition. A representative of AKC Government Relations will be invited to participate.

**Massachusetts** – [HB 2547](#) would authorize the emergency transport and treatment of police K-9s injured in the line of duty. AKC GR urged Massachusetts residents to contact their lawmakers and request that they co-sponsor the bill; and as a result, a significant number of new legislators signed on as co-sponsors. A companion bill, [SB 1606](#), was refiled in the Senate. AKC GR issued an [alert](#) and testified in support before the Joint Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee on July 14, 2021.

**Massachusetts** – [SB 230](#) and [HB 384](#) are refiled bills that seek to ban the retail sale of cats and dogs in pet shops unless they are sourced from animal shelters or rescue organizations. Similar to past versions, the proposed animal shelter and rescue definitions are problematic because they exclude rescue activities by breeders. The bills initially were assigned to the Joint Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee for review, which last session redrafted them to create consumer protections irrespective of the source of the pet. The bills have been reassigned to the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. AKC GR anticipates public hearings this fall.

**Massachusetts** – [HB 305](#) seeks to establish state licensure for commercial boarding and training kennels and would specify staff-to-dog ratios; group sizes and supervision; housing and care conditions; indoor and outdoor facility requirements; dog handling requirements; insurance; and fire and emergency plans. In addition, the state would approve required training programs regarding animal behavior, dog body language, and other subjects for employed staff. Injuries to dogs or people would be reported to the state. Other types of kennels (including personal kennels) could be required in the future to obtain state licensure in addition to a municipal kennel license, subject to rules and regulations relating to animal care and health as suggested by an advisory committee. AKC GR issued [an alert](#) and testified at the July 12 public hearing. Following the hearing, AKC GR recommended changes to the bill.

**Massachusetts** – [HB 378](#) would require anyone who grooms a pet for money to pass approved testing standards and obtain a state grooming license. Grooming facilities would also undergo periodic inspections to ensure compliance with rules and regulations issued. Use of a cage or box dryer would be prohibited. Violations would result in penalties ranging from \$100 to \$1,000 per offense. AKC GR testified at the public hearing on July 12, 2021, regarding concerns detailed in AKC GR's [alert](#). Following the hearing, AKC GR met virtually with the bill sponsor's office and outlined suggested amendments to the legislation.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 92](#) would establish a committee to study best practices for companion animal groomers. The House Commerce and Consumer Affairs Committee has scheduled a work session for September 7, 2021, at 10:30am.

**New Hampshire** – AKC GR and NH DOGS testified in support of [HB 249](#), which seeks to authorize animal shelters to own or lease a facility rather than be required to own it. The bill also clarifies which exemptions to health certificate requirements apply to animal shelters, and requires that shelters contact the microchip owner of record before any transfer of the animal. HB 249 passed the House. AKC GR also testified in support of HB 249 before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The bill passed the Senate, and then the House on June 11. Governor Sununu signed it into law on August 17. These provisions take effect 60 days following signature. [Read more.](#)

**New Hampshire** – Prior to enactment of a 2019 law, a commercial breeder in the state who transferred fewer than 50 dogs in a year was not required to get municipal zoning authorization as a prerequisite for state licensure. In 2019, legislation was enacted that removed the state’s definition of commercial breeder and classified a person as a pet vendor if they transfer 25 dogs in a 12-month period. The 2019 change required all applicants for a pet vendor license to obtain municipal zoning authorization. As a result of this legislative change, several dog breeders who were previously licensed were not granted municipal zoning authorization and have been unable to obtain the state’s new pet vendor license, which is a violation of their due process rights. [HB 250](#) addresses these issues by (1) raising the minimum transfer threshold to 35 dogs, and (2) “grandfathering” those breeders who were not previously required to petition local authorities for authorization before obtaining a state license so they will not need local authorization before applying to operate as a pet vendor. AKC GR and the New Hampshire Dog Owners of the Granite State testified in support of the bill. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee lowered the dog transfer threshold to 30. The bill as amended was signed into law by Governor Sununu on August 17.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 338](#), supported by AKC, increases the penalty for dog theft and illegally tampering with tracking collar. Governor Sununu [signed the bill into law](#) on July 29, 2021. It will take effect on January 1, 2022.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 366](#) would authorize a court to order psychological evaluation and treatment for animal cruelty caused by animal hoarding disorder. The House Environment and Agriculture Committee has scheduled a work session for September 14, 2021, at 1pm.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 367](#) would enact certain requirements for a dog, cat, or ferret imported into the state for transfer of ownership. Requirements include receiving a health certificate from a licensed veterinarian and being held for a 7-day quarantine period. A work session has been scheduled for September 14, 2021, at 2pm, by the House Environment and Agriculture Committee.

**New Hampshire** – [HB 585](#) would allow the prepayment of dog licensing fees for the duration of a rabies vaccination. The House Environment and Agriculture Committee will be working on this bill during their work session scheduled for September 14, 2021.

**New Hampshire** – [SB 17](#), among other provisions, would permit brew pubs to allow customers to bring dogs onto outdoor areas. The Senate Commerce Committee has scheduled a work session on the bill for September 8, 2021, at 11:30am.

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