

New England State Issues April 2022

By [AKC Government Relations](#)

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Connecticut – [HB 5170](#) would establish requirements for the adequate sheltering of dogs and add additional requirements concerning the tethering of dogs. After a public hearing by the Joint Planning and Development Committee on Friday, February 25, 2022 the committee [amended HB 5170](#) to prevent dogs from being left outside without shelter for more than 15 minutes after a National Weather Service advisory is issued, unless accompanied by a person. The committee voted the bill favorably and it is now on the House calendar for consideration. [Read more.](#)

Connecticut – [SB 141](#) would amend the animal cruelty statute by elevating the intentional injury of any animal while in the performance of its duties under the supervision of law enforcement, or any dog performing for a volunteer search and rescue team, to a class C felony. Current law classifies the killing of these animals as a class C felony, but intentional injury is only classified as Class D, the least serious type of felony. AKC GR submitted testimony to the Joint Public Safety and Security Committee on March 3, supporting SB 141 for its potential to deter harm to these working dogs. The bill was voted favorably and sent to the Judiciary Committee.

Connecticut – [SB 234](#) would make significant changes to kennel and dog licensing laws. AKC GR understands the intent of the changes are to update and modernize processes, but issued [an alert](#) outlining concerns with the bill and expressed them at the Joint Environment Committee public hearing on March 7, 2022. In response, the committee chose not to advance SB 234 but, [amended HB 5295](#) to establish a working group at the Department of Agriculture to address concerns raised at the public hearing. AKC GR has been invited to participate and issued the following [update](#).

Connecticut – [HB 5232](#) “Concerning Service Animals” is supported by AKC GR because it would update Connecticut’s laws to ensure its terms and definitions are consistent with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. The bill is a reflection of work done by a 2019 workgroup that AKC GR participated in. The committee voted it favorably on March 8 and it is now on the House calendar for consideration.

Connecticut – Among other provisions, [HB 5498](#) would designate the shelter pet as Connecticut’s state pet. AKC GR posted [information](#) about the bill’s hearing on March 25. After hearing support and opposition to this provision, the Joint Government Administration and Elections Committee voted to place HB 5498 on the House consent calendar anticipating unanimous support. More details are [here](#).

Maine – [LD 1828](#) would require the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to contract a third-party for the administration of the Companion Animal Sterilization Fund. After a public hearing on January 20, 2022. The bill passed both chambers and was signed by the Governor as [Chapter 523 of the Acts of 2022](#) on March 29.

Maine – LD 1885 “An Act to Increase Maine’s Veterinary Workforce” would expand a loan program to increase the veterinary workforce in the state. AKC GR and the Maine Federation of Dog Clubs support this initiative. A public hearing by the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business was held on February 3 and the committee made minor changes to bill. AKC GR has submitted a letter of support for [LD 1885, as amended](#), and issued [an alert](#) encouraging emails in support of passage before the session closes on April 20, 2022.

Maine – AKC GR is pleased to note that Senator Marianne Moore has again filed a Resolution, [SP 669](#), identifying May 1, 2022 as Purebred Dog Day.

Maine – [LD 482](#) would adopt a model act for the regulation of pet insurance. It is a concept bill that was considered on February 24, 2022 by the Joint Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services and as of April 5, had been adopted by the House and Senate.

Massachusetts – Despite AKC GR testimony in opposition to [SB 1322](#), the bill has been released favorably again this session from the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government and sent to the Senate Ways and Means Committee. Among other restrictions, the bill would allow municipal animal control officers to tell residents how many dogs or cats they can own after an inspection of their premises upon kennel license application. AKC GR submitted a detailed letter outlining concerns with the text on December 21, 2021. Supporters of [HB 305](#), “Ollie’s Law” which did not receive a favorable committee report, are looking to accomplish the same objectives in bills such as SB 1322 and hosted a rally at the statehouse on March 10. AKC GR is organizing Massachusetts club members and affected stakeholders to respond, as appropriate.

Massachusetts – [SB 2397](#) would prohibit the misrepresentation of a service animal. AKC GR submitted testimony in support to the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs for the public hearing that was held on January 7, 2022. On February 14, the bill was reported favorably by committee and referred to the committee on Senate Ways and Means.

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 in support and request that they co-sponsor the bill. Amendments provide flexibility when utilizing the provision if ambulances are in limited supply or an emergency veterinary clinic is not nearby. Signed into law as Chapter 23 of the Acts of 2022, on February 18, 2022, AKC GR was invited to attend a celebratory signing with the Governor on April 12, 2022.

Massachusetts – The Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture heard testimony on three bills to protect research animals, allowing adoption after health examination upon retiring from research activities. AKC GR supported [HB 901](#) and [HB 966](#) at the November 17, 2021 hearing, but noted that definitions for animal shelter and rescue in the bill were inconsistent with current law. The committee advanced the bill favorably on February 3, 2022. HB 901 is on the House calendar for consideration and AKC GR has highlighted the inconsistency with House leaders.

Massachusetts – [SB 551](#) would create an advisory board, with a shelter and rescue coordinator serving as chair, to oversee various functions of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. AKC GR expressed concerns to the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture at the November 17, 2021 public hearing, noting that a formal advisory board with permanent members chaired by a shelter and rescue coordinator is not necessary for the state agency to function effectively. The bill advanced favorably from committee and is in the Senate Rules Committee waiting for placement on the Senate calendar.

Massachusetts – [SB 2672](#) was released favorably on February 10, 2022, by the Joint Judiciary Committee as a re-write of nine bills. AKC GR issued [an alert](#) summarizing before testifying at the May 19, 2021, public hearing. The bill would insert domestic animals and livestock into the civil fine structure for lack of adequate shelter or sanitation for dogs. Civil fines collected would be forwarded to the Homeless Fund that provides money for ACO training and the state spay/neuter program. It also provides the court with great latitude in deciding how long the offender will be prohibited from owning animals, including exceptions if an offender can prove they are capable of caring for animals or have sought required counseling. AKC GR is monitoring this bill.

New Hampshire – [SB 368](#) has been filed at the request of the Commissioner for the Department of Agriculture and Markets to address challenges enforcing the licensed pet vendor requirements. It would provide authority to seize animals maintained by a pet vendor and housed in the licensed portion of a premise if, within 30 days of license revocation, the animals have not been transferred to another person. AKC GR and NH DOGS raised constitutional issues among other problems at the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources public hearing on January 11, 2022. The committee amended the title and text of SB 368 to establish a hearing officer revolving fund and fines of up to \$5,000 for any second or subsequent violation of the pet vendor license laws. [Amended SB 368](#) passed the Senate on March 24 and the House Environment and Agriculture Committee had a public hearing on April 12 and 19.

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 held a work session on September 14, where AKC GR reviewed recommended changes to the draft. The committee voted to next secure review and input from the Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, who is a retired judge. AKC GR participated in that review process and the Chairs are now working on amendments. The bill has been referred to an interim study.

New Hampshire – Representative Gallagher reached out to AKC GR for assistance with his bill, HB 1186. It would mandate that emergency shelters allow individuals to relocate with their companion

animals when ordered to evacuate. Per NH's Disaster Animal Response Team, four emergency trailers across the state can be deployed, but significant gaps in the emergency response plan exist. AKC GR testified in support of the bill's intent on January 25 and worked with the committee on an appropriate amendment to require emergency shelters make space for trailers or other pet accommodations on site. [HB 1186, as amended](#), was voted ought to pass by the House on March 15 and has now been sent to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

New Hampshire – [HB 1327](#) supported by AKC GR, would include diabetes in the conditions listed for eligibility for a service animal. On February 16, 2022, it was voted “ought to pass” by the House Committee on Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs. The Senate Health and Human Services Committee scheduled a public hearing for March 16 and AKC GR submitted testimony in support.

Rhode Island – [S. 2227](#) and [H. 7678](#) have been re-filed for consideration this session. The bills would authorize the court to appoint a student attorney or pro bono attorney in any civil or criminal case to represent an animal in the interests of justice. AKC GR and the Rhode Island ACLU are in opposition. HB 7678 had a public hearing before the House Judiciary Committee on March 10 and AKC GR and the Rhode Island kennel clubs expressed opposition given it would change the property legal status of animals and provide non-human legal rights instead. The bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [H. 6624](#) would establish an animal abuser registry that requires pet sellers to check the registry prior to transfer and face penalties for transferring an animal to a convicted abuser on the registry. This bill is a re-filed measure that AKC GR has previously expressed concerns with and did again via telephone to the House Judiciary Committee on January 25, 2022. It has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [H. 7021](#) would authorize the emergency treatment and transport of a police K9 injured in the line of duty. AKC GR supports this bill. AKC GR issued [an alert](#) requesting support before the public hearing on February 3, 2022 by the House Health and Human Services Committee. The bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [H. 7088](#) would amend the district courts' domestic violence protections to include pets in protection orders. We applaud this effort, particularly given the complex dilemma involving pets and domestic violence situations. However, AKC GR is concerned about the use of the word “custody” in [H. 7088](#) and recommended on January 25, that the House Judiciary Committee reserve this legal term for children only. The bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [H. 7087](#) would create a court procedure for pets in divorce and separation proceedings based on the best interests of the animal. Long-standing legal traditions in the United States provide that pets are considered the legal property of their owners, under which their care and treatment is ensured. Last session, AKC GR worked with the bill sponsor to amend the predecessor bill by replacing “custody” with “possession or ownership”. AKC GR testified in

support of H. 7087 on January 25 and the Committee voted on March 10 that it ought to pass. The House passed H. 7087 on March 22 and it was sent to Senate Judiciary committee for review.

Rhode Island – [H. 7305](#) would add the general agent of the Rhode Island society for the prevention of cruelty to animals and any special agents appointed by the society while enforcing any of the laws of this state in relation to cruelty of animals to the definition of peace officers. This is to clarify the role of these agents and AKC GR will monitor the bill. The bill had a hearing February 17 and has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [H. 7572](#) is a re-filed bill that would prohibit a person convicted of killing an animal or of unnecessary cruelty to animals amounting to torture from owning or exercising control of an animal for life. Violators would be subject to a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1000) for each violation. The House Judiciary public hearing was March 10, 2022. The bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [H. 7573](#) would create a legal process by which formerly cohabitating parties could seek from the district court a determination as to ownership of any pet. Because it would change the legal status of animals as property, AKC GR opposes HB 7573 and submitted written testimony for the House Judiciary public hearing on March 10. The bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [H. 7785](#) would authorize the director of the department of environmental management to establish quarantine zones for animals and would permit the examination of any quarantined animal therein. AKC GR submitted testimony in support of the measure for the March 10, 2022 public hearing by the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. The bill was reported favorably and passed by the House on March 17 before being sent to the Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee. On April 6, the Senate Committee received public testimony on [S. 2751](#), identical to H. 7785, and AKC GR submitted testimony in support.

Rhode Island – [H. 7573](#) would create a legal process by which formerly cohabitating parties could seek from the district court a determination as to ownership of any pet. Because it would change the legal status of animals as property, AKC GR opposes HB 7573. The bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [S. 2121](#) is intended to protect the welfare of animals left unattended in motor vehicles by expanding law enforcement officers' current authority to rescue an animal in distress. If enacted, an officer would have the authority to maintain custody of the animal for 72 hours or until a court hearing was scheduled where the court may refuse to return custody of the animal to the owner. AKC GR submitted testimony for the March 29 public hearing by the Senate Judiciary Committee expressing concerns that, as written, the bill violates due process protections governing personal property. The bill has been held for further study.

Rhode Island – [S. 2651](#) was filed to ban the import of large animals into the state for canned hunting activities by defining and prohibiting “captive hunting”. The definition expressly excludes the release of upland game birds for hunting, but AKC GR and the Northeast Beagle Gundog Federation have concerns that the text may unintentionally harm lawful beagle training and field trials with rabbits. Both AKC GR and the Federation submitted testimony with a recommendation to also expressly exclude these activities in the text of S. 2651 for the Senate Judiciary hearing held on March 29. The bill has been held for further study.

Vermont – [SB 155](#) would reorganize public safety services within the Executive Branch and create the Agency of Public Safety to oversee functions, including provision of administrative support to the Animal Cruelty Investigation Advisory Board. Last session, Vermont charged this board with providing training and certification to animal control officers in the state. Before releasing the bill favorably, the Senate Government Operations Committee [amended SB 155](#) and included a requirement that state agencies review domestic animal welfare oversight responsibilities and make recommendations for legislation to ensure public health and safety. AKC GR and the Vermont Federation of Dog Clubs support this work and [an alert](#) was issued. SB 155 as amended was passed by the Senate on March 24 and was sent to the House Government Operations Committee. AKC GR submitted a letter of support.

Vermont – [HB 250](#) would impose a strict liability standard for injury caused by domestic dogs. More than 30 states have this standard. The House Committee on Judiciary is reviewing the measure.

Vermont – [HB 622](#) would require the Office of Professional Regulation to license service dog trainers that provide service dog training services to individuals with a disability. AKC GR is monitoring this bill.

Vermont – [SB 129](#) proposes to transfer the authority to adopt rules for the taking of fish, wildlife, and fur-bearing animals from the Fish and Wildlife Board to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. It would also amend the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Board so that it serves in an advisory capacity only, to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. This bill was carried over from last year and has resulted in considerable debate during March 2022 by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy. Sporting and hunting stakeholders are concerned these changes weaken the role of board appointees representing counties from across the state. AKC is monitoring the bill.