

New England State Issues June 2022

By [AKC Government Relations](#)

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Connecticut – [SB 234](#) would make significant changes to kennel and dog licensing laws. AKC GR understands the changes intend 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](#). HB 5295 passed the House and the Senate before it was signed into law on May 10 as [Public Act 22-54](#). The working group held its initial meeting on June 16 and the Connecticut Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners' President participated with AKC GR.

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. The bill would create uniform standards regulating dog daycare facilities, boarding kennels and training operations while restricting personal kennels by authorizing municipal animal control officers to determine how many dogs or cats an individual can own after an inspection of their premises upon kennel license application. State regulations would also determine responsible breeding practices. Because legislation regulating dog daycare facilities did not survive the committee process, advocates are aggressively pursuing SB 1322 passage. AKC GR is working with specific stakeholders to ensure collective concerns are addressed prior to movement and [an alert](#) was issued on June 10.

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. The bill was reported favorably by committee and referred to the committee on Senate Ways and Means.

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](#), but noted that definitions for animal shelter and rescue in the bill were inconsistent with current law. The committee advanced the bill favorably. HB 901 passed the House and has been sent to the Senate Rules Committee for consideration.

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, 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 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](#) was 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. The committee amended bill 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 in March. The House Environment and Agriculture Committee hosted public hearings where AKC GR and NH DOGS expressed opposition. Before the committee's favorable vote, [an amendment](#) was adopted striking the \$5000 fine increase, and capping the revolving fund at \$75,000 which reflects the annual amount of fines already collected. Further, the amendment establishes administrative fines for anyone transferring a dog, cat or ferret without the health certificate already required by law. The House and Senate concurred with these changes and the Governor signed it into law on June 17 as [Chapter 225](#), effective on January 1, 2023.

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 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](#), has passed the House and Senate. AKC GR submitted a letter of support to the Governor.

Rhode Island – [S. 2443](#) would authorize forfeiture of any animal seized by the Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RISPCA) if the defendant is found guilty and fails to reimburse RISPCA within 30 days for the boarding and care of animals held pending court proceedings. AKC GR issued [an alert](#) noting the lack of protections for one who is found innocent and testified on April 27 before the Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture requesting amendments. The committee proposed and adopted an [amended S. 2443](#) responding to AKC concerns and the Senate passed the amended bill on May 17. An identical companion bill was then filed in the House as [H. 8303](#) and considered by the House Judiciary Committee on June 7. Both bills were voted favorably and sent to the Governor for consideration on June 23, 2022.

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. H. 7678 has been held for further study. On May 12, the Senate Judiciary scheduled S. 2227 for public hearing and AKC testified in opposition on a panel with RI ACLU. The bills failed upon adjournment of the legislative session on June 23.

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 to the House Judiciary Committee in early 2022. It has been held for further study. A Senate companion bill, [S. 2701](#) had a public hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on May 12 and AKC testified in opposition on a panel with RI ACLU. The bills failed upon adjournment of the legislative session on June 23.

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 by the House Health and Human Services Committee. The committee added stakeholders to assist with establishing policies and procedures and passed [H. 7021 as amended](#). AKC GR issued [an alert](#) in support and the bill passed the House on May 3, 2022. The Senate Judiciary Committee held a public hearing on June 2, AKC submitted supportive testimony and an identical companion bill was then filed as [S.3019](#) for consideration on June 16. On June 23, both chambers voted these bills favorably and they were transmitted to the Governor for consideration.

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 that the House Judiciary Committee reserve this legal term for children only. The bill failed upon adjournment of the legislative session on June 23.

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 and the Committee voted that it ought to pass. The House passed H. 7087 and it was sent to Senate Judiciary committee for review. The bill failed upon adjournment of the legislative session on June 23.

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 monitored the bill. The bill had a hearing but, it failed upon adjournment of the legislative session on June 23.

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 held a public hearing. The bill failed upon adjournment of the legislative session on June 23.

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 opposed HB 7573 and submitted written testimony for the House Judiciary public hearing. The bill failed upon adjournment of the legislative session on June 23.

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 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. AKC GR submitted testimony in support when the Senate Committee received public testimony on [S. 2751](#), identical to H. 7785. S. 2751 passed the Senate on May 3 and was signed by the Governor May 24.

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 failed upon adjournment of the legislative session on June 23.

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. The bill failed upon adjournment of the legislative session on June 23.

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 and was sent to the House Government Operations Committee. AKC GR submitted a letter of support. With no action in the House on SB 155, the Senate moved on May 3 to amend HB 729 with text establishing the animal welfare protections and unification of government functions and the bill was then sent to the House Judiciary Committee for acceptance. The amendment text can be viewed on page 4187 of the Senate's May 3 calendar, posted [here](#). AKC GR issued [this alert](#) requesting emails in support to the House Judiciary Committee, which made minor changes to the text and sent it back to the full Senate. The Senate unanimously concurred with these changes on May 10 and the Governor signed it into law June 1.

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"I love being a part of something that is grassroots, and you can see the actual changes, the effect of what people do..." – Anthony Edwards