

New England State Capitol Issues March 2025

Connecticut – [HB 6226](#) allows an impounded dog, including those deemed dangerous and seized by animal control, to be housed in a volunteer's foster home after 90 days while pending final court disposition. AKC issued [this alert](#) and is submitting opposition at the March 24 Joint Environment Committee hearing.

Connecticut – [H.B.6277](#) mandates that “animal breeders” (any person who breeds dogs, cats, rabbits or guinea pigs for sale or transfer to an animal testing facility) and animal testing facilities offer dogs, cats, rabbits, or guinea pigs that are no longer needed and do not pose a health or safety risk to the public for adoption by animal adoption or rescue organizations maintained on a Department of Agriculture list. It also provides that animal breeders and testing facilities will not be held liable for any harm or defects associated with animals adopted under this provision. AKC issued [this alert](#) and is submitting opposition at the March 24 Joint Environment Committee hearing.

Connecticut – [HB 6240](#) was raised for consideration by the Joint Environment Committee on March 17. It would amend existing statutes concerning the sale of animals in pet stores by prohibiting the sourcing of animals from any USDA breeder with a direct or indirect violation of the Animal Welfare Act in the past seven (7) years. In addition, pet shops would annually report to the Department of Agriculture the origin of animals sourced, the number of violations and their nature. AKC issued [this alert](#) and will submit concerns at the March 24 Joint Environment Committee hearing.

Connecticut – [HB 6218](#) (An Act Concerning Qualifications for Employment as an Animal Control Officer) disqualifies anyone with a history of animal cruelty from being qualified as an animal control officer. AKC issued [this alert](#) and is submitting support at the March Joint Environment Committee hearing.

Connecticut – [HB 5902](#) (An Act Concerning the Breeding of Animals in the State) regulates the breeding of animals within the state by mandating that individuals or companies involved in breeding activities be registered with the Department of Agriculture which would establish comprehensive guidelines for animal breeding practices, develop and maintain a breeder registry, and collect registration fees from breeders. AKC has contacted the sponsor who indicated that she is concerned about overpopulation at Connecticut shelters.

Connecticut – [SB 1386](#) prohibits homeowners' insurance and renters' insurance policies from discriminating based on harboring or owning any dog of a specific breed or mixture of breeds. In addition, the state would evaluate the feasibility of establishing penalties for the intentional misrepresentation of a dog as a service animal. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted testimony in support for the Joint Insurance and Real Estate Committee's public hearing on March 4. On March 11, despite opposition from the insurance industry, the Committee approved a [new draft of SB 1386](#) that would also prohibit insurance discrimination against owners of a therapy animal based upon breed.

Connecticut – [HB 6998](#) requires the licensing of dogs every three years instead of annually and would continue to impose the current fees that are higher for intact dogs. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted testimony outlining concerns with the bill for the February 24 public hearing.

Connecticut – [HB 6964](#) creates a taskforce to study what provisions could be made in certain circumstances to allow emergency medical services personnel to provide emergency treatment and transportation to an injured police K-9. AKC issued [this alert](#) and submitted testimony in support for the February 18 public hearing. The committee met on March 18 and voted it favorably to the House floor.

Connecticut – [HB 6832](#) authorizes municipalities to adopt local ordinances banning the retail sale of dogs, cats and rabbits. AKC issued [an alert](#) that the Joint Planning and Development Committee was accepting testimony February 3 and testified in opposition. On March 12, the committee voted 15 "yes" to 5 "no" to advance HB 6832, despite AKC's concerns and significant testimony in opposition.

Connecticut – [HB 5112](#) (An Act Prohibiting Certain Sales and Leases of Dogs, Cats and Rabbits in Retail Pet Stores) was voted January 22 by the Joint General Law Committee to be drafted and was considered on February 10. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in opposition. Similarly, [HB 6240](#), [HB 6255](#), [HB 5909](#) and [HB 5138](#) are bills designed to further regulate pet stores that have been sent to the Joint Environment Committee for consideration. On March 12, the Joint General Law Committee acknowledged concerns raised and its limited scope with respect to the bill's objectives and therefore voted to forward the bill for consideration by the Joint Environment Committee.

Connecticut – [S.B.166](#) imposes penalties to prevent fraud and abuse by persons claiming to have service animals. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Human Services.

Connecticut – [S.B.182](#) authorizes the use of health savings or flexible spending accounts for veterinary expenses. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Insurance and Real Estate.

Connecticut – [S.B.272](#) and [S.B. 267](#) allows emergency medical services personnel to provide emergency treatment and transportation to police animals injured under certain circumstances. These have been assigned to the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Security.

Connecticut – [H.B.5055](#) allows veterinarians to deviate from standard vaccine dosage protocols when it is deemed beneficial for the health and well-being of the animal, including permitting veterinarians to use a rabies antibody titer test to assess whether an animal requires a rabies booster vaccine. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Public Health.

Connecticut – [S.B. 342](#) amends the general statutes to limit the liability of municipalities for injuries that occur in skateboard parks or dog parks that they maintain. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

Maine – [LD 824](#) prohibits a landlord, agent, contractor, designee or other entity from charging or collecting a fee as a condition of keeping a pet within a rented dwelling unit, but would allow a fee for “pet rent” not to exceed 1% of the monthly rental charge and a pet security deposit charge not to exceed \$300. However, LD 824 would prohibit charging or collecting a fee for a service animal or an assistance animal. It was referred to the Committee on Housing and Economic Development on March 4.

Maine – [LD 962](#) creates a new criminal offense of aggravated operating under the influence resulting in the death of a pet and impose a mandatory fine, a period of incarceration, a court-ordered suspension of a driver’s license and mandatory community service related to animal welfare. The bill would also require the offender to provide restitution to the owner of the pet, including veterinary costs, the market value of the pet and a sum for emotional distress. On March 6 it was referred to the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

Maine – [LD 1057](#) imposes a one-year moratorium on the requirement for municipalities participating in the electronic dog licensing project to implement the PetPoint software or any other data management platform allowing municipalities to continue using alternative methods for issuing dog licenses. It also mandates the Department of

Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to establish a software user group tasked with assisting in the transition to a new data management platform.

Maine – [L.D. 133](#) amends the laws regarding nuisance dogs. AKC issued [an alert](#) noting the proposed text conflicts with municipal authority by including barking dogs in the law addressing dangerous dogs. AKC testified in opposition at the February 6 public hearing by the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and submitted suggested changes. The committee has received 100 [written testimonies](#) primarily in support of tools to effectively solve barking dog issues.

Maine – [LD 308](#) amends the laws governing the Animal Welfare Advisory Council to enhance the administrative functions of the council by allowing it to hold regular public meetings at least every other month, with the option to waive a succeeding meeting by a majority vote. The chair would be empowered to call special meetings upon written request by two or more members and authorized to delegate duties to council members individually or through the formation of subcommittees. The Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry held a hearing on February 27 and voted the bill out as ought to pass on March 11. The House engrossed the bill on March 18.

Maine – [LD 498](#) mandates the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to establish rules for animal rescue entities, with a particular focus on dog rescue operations. According to the bill sponsor, an animal rescue operator has 30 to 40 dogs in their home they are incapable of adequately caring for and the state has not responded to requests for action. The Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry held a hearing on February 27. It was voted ought not to pass on March 6.

Maine – [LD 528](#) would establish a system of Certified Rabies Vaccinators appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry after training to administer rabies vaccines to animals. AKC issued [this information](#) noting a March 13 public hearing was held by the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The committee is considering an amendment presented by the bill sponsor to also authorize licensed vet techs to administer rabies vaccine under the “indirect” supervision of a licensed veterinarian.

Massachusetts – [SB 1458](#) and [HB 2253](#) (An Act Relative To Updating Animal Health Inspections) require persons selling, exchanging or otherwise transferring the offspring of their personally owned animals to be licensed, inspected and regulated as a pet shop. These have been referred to the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government.

Massachusetts – [HB 2319](#) mandate annual reporting by certain nonprofit animal placement entities on the importation of dogs and cats into Massachusetts. The report must detail the number of dogs and cats brought into Massachusetts during the previous year, including the state or country of origin for each animal, along with identification of the origination source and transporter. This reporting requirement is intended to provide better oversight and tracking of animal movements into the state, thereby supporting animal health and welfare. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government.

Massachusetts – [SB 1207](#) imposes restrictions on individuals convicted of animal abuse by prohibiting them from owning or accessing animals for a specified period. For a first offense, the prohibition lasts at least five years from the date of conviction or release from custody, whichever is later, and extends to at least fifteen years for subsequent offenses. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

Massachusetts – [HB 3850](#) establishes The Massachusetts Veterans Service Dog Program. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs.

Massachusetts – [SB 1206](#) standardizes courts' consideration of pets in divorce and separation by allowing "joint custody". AKC believes as property, the court ought to use the legal term "ownership" instead of "custody" which applies to children. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

Massachusetts – [HB 1914](#) imposes a temporary possession ban of animals for animal abusers. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

Massachusetts – [HB 337](#) requires veterinarians seeking license renewal to provide evidence of completing continuing education as required by the board's regulations. For veterinarians who have temporarily retired or moved out of the state, it would allow for re-registration within 5 years by paying the lapsed license fee and submitting an affidavit.

Massachusetts – [HB 3024](#) creates a sales tax exemption for animal medication prescribed by veterinarians. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure.

Massachusetts – [SB 1263](#) focuses on the protection and valuation of pets, specifically cats and dogs, including the fair monetary value of the deceased animal to its owner, compensation for the loss of comfort, protection, companionship, and other special damages such as the recovery of reasonable afterlife expenses, court costs, and attorney’s fees. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

Massachusetts – [HB 1938](#) (An Act Enhancing The Issuance Of Citations For Cruel Conditions For Animals) requires the commissioner of the Department of Agricultural Resources, in consultation with the Animal Control Officers Association of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Animal Rescue League of Boston, promulgate regulations to implement, enforce, and administer regulations for dogs and animals under [MGL c. 140 § 174E \(f\) and \(g\)](#). It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Judiciary.

Massachusetts – [SB 618](#) bans the retail sale of dogs, cats, rabbits, and guinea pigs in pet shops eliminating consumer protections while encouraging the showcasing of animals from shelters and rescues at these locations. It has been referred to the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

New Hampshire – [HB 616](#) would, among many provisions, (1) ensure a person charged with animal cruelty is aware of their right to hire a licensed veterinarian of their choice to examine the animals; (2) require proof that proper care and facilities can be provided for adults and offspring by the confiscating party; and (3) prohibit anyone initiating an animal welfare complaint from participating in or being present during any investigation into that complaint. AKC issued this [alert](#) in support and testified at the March 4 House Environment and Agriculture Committee hearing. The committee held multiple meetings and re-drafted the bill based upon testimony received. [Amended HB 616](#) was voted ought to pass on March 18.

New Hampshire – [SB 290](#) amends the description of the crime of animal cruelty to insert a broad definition and application for the word “torture” where it appears, without exception for current lawful animal activities. The Senate Judiciary Committee held a public hearing for February 18. AKC testified and issued [this alert](#) in opposition. On February 21 the committee voted to re-refer the bill to its committee for additional research. That recommendation was on the Senate calendar March 6 when a motion was approved by the Senate to lay the bill on the table.

New Hampshire – [HB 240](#) removes the penalty for non-payment of dog licenses. AKC testified on January 21 in opposition because compliance with rabies vaccination

requirements is enforced by dog licensure. A subcommittee has proposed clarification that a town “may” issue an animal forfeiture warrant to someone not in compliance rather than “shall” to allow additional time for compliance. After adoption of [the amendment](#), the bill was sent to the House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee on February 13. AKC is no longer concerned about the bill and on March 19 the committee voted it ought to pass.

New Hampshire – [HB 86](#) increases the cost of service for notice of civil forfeiture of unlicensed dogs to the rate for certified mail. The committee voted January 28 for it to pass with an [amendment](#) ensuring the increased rate would mirror the actual cost. The House voted it ought to pass on February 6. The Senate referred it to the Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee on March 6.

New Hampshire – [HB 250](#) enables local governing bodies to regulate the muzzling of dogs. AKC expressed concern at the House Environment and Agriculture Committee’s March 5 hearing that breeds considered dangerous could be discriminated against by broad ordinance adoption and encouraged the committee to amend the bill by offering municipalities with ordinance tools for identifying dangerous dogs and methods to restrain and remediate them while ensuring public safety. The committee adopted [an amendment](#) that narrows the municipal authority to adopt muzzle ordinances for vicious dogs and voted the bill ought to pass as amended on March 18.

New Hampshire – [HB 153](#) requires that two or more law enforcement officers in each county receive training regarding animal cruelty. The House Environment and Agriculture Committee heard testimony January 21 that law enforcement needs additional training on animal cruelty laws and investigations. A subcommittee met February 14 and presented [an amendment](#) to the full committee that would establish a committee to study adding a statewide resource to assist with the investigation, training, prosecution, and prompt response of animal cruelty. It was adopted and the amended bill voted ought to pass. On March 6, the House waived a Finance Committee referral and the Senate referred it to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. At a hearing scheduled for March 18, AKC submitted testimony in support and the committee voted unanimously it ought to pass.

New Hampshire – [HB 262](#) impacts group licenses for dogs by raising certain licensing fees and limiting the number of dogs allowed by a holder of a group license. The House Environment and Agriculture Committee heard testimony in opposition from the New Hampshire Dogs of the Granite State (NH DOGS) at the March 5 hearing. It was voted inexpedient to legislate on March 11.

New Hampshire – [HB 267](#) exempts individuals with degrees in veterinary medicine or chiropractics who have completed a nationally recognized animal chiropractic program from veterinary licensure requirements. The committee voted January 22 that it ought to pass.

New Hampshire – [HB 272](#) exempts certain agricultural practices from municipal quiet hours and includes in the definition of activities related to farms, agriculture and farming the use of dogs for herding, working, or guarding livestock. AKC supports the exemption from municipal noise regulations/restrictions for these activities. After a hearing on February 12, the bill was voted ought to pass on February 20.

New Hampshire – [SB 32](#) allows the Fish and Game Commission’s public hearing notices to be posted digitally on newspaper websites and make other changes for anglers. The committee held a hearing and voted January 30 that the bill ought to pass with [amendment](#).

New Hampshire – [S.B.50](#) establishes a committee to study the regulation of private animal boarding facilities. After the January 23 hearing, the committee voted it ought to pass on January 30.

New Hampshire – [HB 593](#) expands the scope of loss of consortium claims to include pets, allowing individuals to seek damages for the loss of love, companionship, comfort, care, assistance, protection, affection, society, and moral support of a pet. The House Judiciary Committee scheduled a public hearing for February 12. AKC testified and issued this [alert in opposition](#). It was voted inexpedient to legislative at the close of the hearing.

Rhode Island – [HB 5128](#) amends the law pertaining to cruelty to animals, by introducing stricter penalties for offenses that result in the death of an animal. The House Judiciary Committee held a public hearing on March 4 and the bill was forwarded to a study committee for review.

Rhode Island – [SB 34](#) would, among many other provisions, remove the sales tax on pet care services. It was sent to Senate Finance.

Rhode Island – [HB 5926](#) would allow for compensation for the loss of companionship, love, and affection provided by a pet that has been seriously injured or killed due to

another person's unlawful and intentional or negligent actions by allowing (1) pet owners to seek noneconomic damages, (2) when the injury or death occurred on the pet owner or caretaker's property or while the pet was under their control and supervision, and (3) establishing minimum recovery amounts of \$500 for serious injury and \$750 for death or injury resulting in death with a maximum of \$7,500 for noneconomic damages. Although pets are held in exceedingly high esteem, allowing non-economic damages in such cases will likely result in many harmful unintentional consequences for pet owners and their pets. AKC issued [this alert](#) and testified in opposition on March 4. The bill is under review by a study committee.

Rhode Island – [SB 325](#) changes the current hobby breeder definition from “persons selling fewer than twenty (20) dogs or three (3) litters, whichever is greater, in a single calendar year,” to the sale or offering for sale of greater than two (2) litters of dogs or cats, or combination of sale of dogs and cats, in any three hundred and sixty-five (365) day period. AKC has reached out to the sponsor with concerns and issued [this alert](#) regarding the Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture public hearing scheduled for March 19.

Rhode Island – [H.B.6089](#) (An Act Relating To Animals And Animal Husbandry — Cruelty To Animals) increases imprisonment penalties and adds mandatory community service for violations of § 4-1-9.

Vermont – [S. 108](#) seeks to generate additional revenue for the Dog, Cat, and Wolf-Hybrid Spaying and Neutering Program by increasing the mandatory dog license fee municipal surcharge from \$4.00 to \$6.00 per license. A pet owner utilizing the program would be required to provide a minimum co-payment of \$50.00 per companion animal. It has a hearing scheduled for March 21 before the Senate Committee on Agriculture.

Vermont – [H.14](#) prohibits the use of animals in product testing. It was referred to the House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry.

Vermont – [H. 183](#) introduces a strict liability standard for injuries caused by domestic dogs, aiming to hold dog owners accountable for any harm their pets may inflict. The provisions establish that dog owners have a duty to keep their dogs under reasonable control and prevent them from running at large. Owners may be held liable for injuries caused by their dogs, regardless of the dog's past behavior or the owner's knowledge of any dangerous tendencies. It was referred to the House Committee on Judiciary.

Vermont – [H. 166](#) introduces comprehensive regulations for hunting with dogs, specifically targeting the training and use of dogs in hunting. It establishes clear definitions for terms such as “accompany,” “at large,” and “control of dog,” emphasizing the need for handlers to maintain close supervision and control over their dogs without relying on electronic devices. It was referred to the House Committee on Environment.

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