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SENATE BILL NO. 304
FLOOR AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
 (Proposed by Senator Stanley
 on February 11, 2020)
 (Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Stanley)
 Senate Amendments in [] - February 11, 2020

A BILL to amend and reenact § 3.2-6546 of the Code of Virginia, relating to animal shelter euthanasia rate.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 3.2-6546 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 3.2-6546. County or city public animal shelters; confinement and disposition of animals; affiliation with foster care providers; reporting requirements; penalties; injunctive relief.

A. For purposes of this section:

"Animal" shall not include agricultural animals.

"Rightful owner" means a person with a right of property in the animal.

B. The governing body of each county or city shall maintain or cause to be maintained a public animal shelter and shall require dogs running at large without the tag required by § 3.2-6531 or in violation of an ordinance passed pursuant to § 3.2-6538 to be confined therein. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit confinement of other companion animals in such a shelter. The governing body of any county or city need not own the facility required by this section but may contract for its establishment with a private group or in conjunction with one or more other local governing bodies. The governing body shall require that:

1. The public animal shelter shall be accessible to the public at reasonable hours during the week;

2. The public animal shelter shall obtain a signed statement from each of its directors, operators, staff, or animal caregivers specifying that each individual has never been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment, and each shelter shall update such statement as changes occur;

3. If a person contacts the public animal shelter inquiring about a lost companion animal, the shelter shall advise the person if the companion animal is confined at the shelter or if a companion animal of similar description is confined at the shelter;

4. The public animal shelter shall maintain a written record of the information on each companion animal submitted to the shelter by a private animal shelter in accordance with subsection D of § 3.2-6548 for a period of 30 days from the date the information is received by the shelter. If a person contacts the shelter inquiring about a lost companion animal, the shelter shall check its records and make available to such person any information submitted by a private animal shelter or allow such person inquiring about a lost animal to view the written records;

5. The public animal shelter shall maintain a written record of the information on each companion animal submitted to the shelter by a releasing agency other than a public or private animal shelter in accordance with subdivision F 2 of § 3.2-6549 for a period of 30 days from the date the information is received by the shelter. If a person contacts the shelter inquiring about a lost companion animal, the shelter shall check its records and make available to such person any information submitted by such releasing agency or allow such person inquiring about a lost companion animal to view the written records; ~~and~~

6. The public animal shelter shall maintain a written record of the information on each companion animal submitted to the shelter by an individual in accordance with subdivision A 2 of § 3.2-6551 for a period of 30 days from the date the information is received by the shelter. If a person contacts the shelter inquiring about a lost companion animal, the shelter shall check its records and make available to such person any information submitted by the individual or allow such person inquiring about a lost companion animal to view the written records; ~~and~~

7. *The public animal shelter shall annually file with the State Veterinarian (i) a copy of its intake policy, (ii) the number of animals on which a euthanasia procedure was performed, and (iii) of such number, the number of animals (a) surrendered with the intent to euthanize and (b) presented by the public animal shelter to a licensed veterinarian prior to euthanasia.*

C. An animal confined pursuant to this section shall be kept for a period of not less than five days, such period to commence on the day immediately following the day the animal is initially confined in the facility, unless sooner claimed by the rightful owner thereof.

The operator or custodian of the public animal shelter shall make a reasonable effort to ascertain whether the animal has a collar, tag, license, tattoo, or other form of identification. If such identification is found on the animal, the animal shall be held for an additional five days, unless sooner claimed by

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60 the rightful owner. If the rightful owner of the animal can be readily identified, the operator or
61 custodian of the shelter shall make a reasonable effort to notify the owner of the animal's confinement
62 within the next 48 hours following its confinement.

63 During the time that an animal is confined pursuant to this subsection, the operator or custodian of
64 the public animal shelter may vaccinate the animal to prevent the risk of communicable diseases,
65 provided that (i) all vaccines are administered in accordance with a protocol approved by a licensed
66 veterinarian and (ii) rabies vaccines are administered by a licensed veterinarian or licensed veterinary
67 technician under the immediate direction and supervision of a licensed veterinarian in accordance with
68 § 3.2-6521.

69 If any animal confined pursuant to this section is claimed by its rightful owner, such owner may be
70 charged with the actual expenses incurred in keeping the animal impounded. In addition to this and any
71 other fees that might be levied, the locality may, after a public hearing, adopt an ordinance to charge the
72 owner of an animal a fee for impoundment and increased fees for subsequent impoundments of the same
73 animal.

74 D. If an animal confined pursuant to this section has not been claimed upon expiration of the
75 appropriate holding period as provided by subsection C, it shall be deemed abandoned and become the
76 property of the public animal shelter.

77 Such animal may be euthanized in accordance with the methods approved by the State Veterinarian
78 or disposed of by the methods set forth in subdivisions 1 through 5. No shelter shall release more than
79 two animals or a family of animals during any 30-day period to any one person under subdivisions
80 subdivision 2, 3, or 4.

81 1. Release to any humane society, public or private animal shelter, or other releasing agency within
82 the Commonwealth, provided that each humane society, animal shelter, or other releasing agency obtains
83 a signed statement from each of its directors, operators, staff, or animal caregivers specifying that each
84 individual has never been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment and updates such
85 statements as changes occur;

86 2. Adoption by a resident of the county or city where the shelter is operated and who will pay the
87 required license fee, if any, on such animal, provided that such resident has read and signed a statement
88 specifying that he has never been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment;

89 3. Adoption by a resident of an adjacent political subdivision of the Commonwealth, if the resident
90 has read and signed a statement specifying that he has never been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect,
91 or abandonment;

92 4. Adoption by any other person, provided that such person has read and signed a statement
93 specifying that he has never been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment and provided
94 that no dog or cat may be adopted by any person who is not a resident of the county or city where the
95 shelter is operated, or of an adjacent political subdivision, unless the dog or cat is first sterilized, and the
96 shelter may require that the sterilization be done at the expense of the person adopting the dog or cat; or

97 5. Release for the purposes of adoption or euthanasia only, to an animal shelter, or any other
98 releasing agency located in and lawfully operating under the laws of another state, provided that such
99 animal shelter, or other releasing agency: (i) maintains records that would comply with § 3.2-6557; (ii)
100 requires that adopted dogs and cats be sterilized; (iii) obtains a signed statement from each of its
101 directors, operators, staff, and animal caregivers specifying that each individual has never been convicted
102 of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment, and updates such statement as changes occur; and (iv) has
103 provided to the public or private animal shelter or other releasing agency within the Commonwealth a
104 statement signed by an authorized representative specifying the entity's compliance with clauses (i)
105 through (iii), and the provisions of adequate care and performance of humane euthanasia, as necessary in
106 accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

107 For purposes of recordkeeping, release of an animal by a public animal shelter to a public or private
108 animal shelter or other releasing agency shall be considered a transfer and not an adoption. If the animal
109 is not first sterilized, the responsibility for sterilizing the animal transfers to the receiving entity.

110 Any proceeds deriving from the gift, sale, or delivery of such animals shall be paid directly to the
111 treasurer of the locality. Any proceeds deriving from the gift, sale, or delivery of such animals by a
112 public or private animal shelter or other releasing agency shall be paid directly to the clerk or treasurer
113 of the animal shelter or other releasing agency for the expenses of the society and expenses incident to
114 any agreement concerning the disposing of such animal. No part of the proceeds shall accrue to any
115 individual except for the aforementioned purposes.

116 E. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the immediate euthanasia of a critically injured, critically ill,
117 or unweaned animal for humane purposes. Any animal euthanized pursuant to the provisions of this
118 chapter shall be euthanized by one of the methods prescribed or approved by the State Veterinarian.

119 F. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the immediate euthanasia or disposal by the methods listed in
120 subdivisions 1 through 5 of subsection D of an animal that has been released to a public or private
121 animal shelter, other releasing agency, or animal control officer by the animal's rightful owner after the

122 rightful owner has read and signed a statement: (i) surrendering all property rights in such animal; (ii)
123 stating that no other person has a right of property in the animal; and (iii) acknowledging that the
124 animal may be immediately euthanized or disposed of in accordance with subdivisions 1 through 5 of
125 subsection D.

126 G. Nothing in this section shall prohibit any feral dog or feral cat not bearing a collar, tag, tattoo, or
127 other form of identification that, based on the written statement of a disinterested person, exhibits
128 behavior that poses a risk of physical injury to any person confining the animal, from being euthanized
129 after being kept for a period of not less than three days, at least one of which shall be a full business
130 day, such period to commence on the day the animal is initially confined in the facility, unless sooner
131 claimed by the rightful owner. The statement of the disinterested person shall be kept with the animal as
132 required by § 3.2-6557. For purposes of this subsection, a disinterested person shall not include a person
133 releasing or reporting the animal.

134 H. No public animal shelter shall place a companion animal in a foster home with a foster care
135 provider unless the foster care provider has read and signed a statement specifying that he has never
136 been convicted of animal cruelty, neglect, or abandonment, and each shelter shall update such statement
137 as changes occur. The shelter shall maintain the original statement and any updates to such statement in
138 accordance with this chapter and for at least so long as the shelter has an affiliation with the foster care
139 provider.

140 I. A public animal shelter that places a companion animal in a foster home with a foster care
141 provider shall ensure that the foster care provider complies with § 3.2-6503.

142 J. If a public animal shelter finds a direct and immediate threat to a companion animal placed with a
143 foster care provider, it shall report its findings to the animal control agency in the locality where the
144 foster care provider is located.

145 K. The governing body shall require that the public animal shelter be operated in accordance with
146 regulations issued by the Board. If this chapter or such regulations are violated, the locality may be
147 assessed a civil penalty by the Board or its designee in an amount that does not exceed \$1,000 per
148 violation. Each day of the violation is a separate offense. In determining the amount of any civil
149 penalty, the Board or its designee shall consider: (i) the history of previous violations at the shelter; (ii)
150 whether the violation has caused injury to, death or suffering of, an animal; and (iii) the demonstrated
151 good faith of the locality to achieve compliance after notification of the violation. All civil penalties
152 assessed under this section shall be recovered in a civil action brought by the Attorney General in the
153 name of the Commonwealth. Such civil penalties shall be paid into a special fund in the state treasury to
154 the credit of the Department to be used in carrying out the purposes of this chapter.

155 L. If this chapter or any laws governing public animal shelters are violated, the Commissioner may
156 bring an action to enjoin the violation or threatened violation of this chapter or the regulations pursuant
157 thereto regarding public animal shelters, in the circuit court where the shelter is located. The
158 Commissioner may request the Attorney General to bring such an action, when appropriate.

159 **[2. That the provisions of this act shall not become effective unless an appropriation effectuating**
160 **the purposes of this act is included in a general appropriation act passed in 2020 by the General**
161 **Assembly that becomes law.]**
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