

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2021 SPECIAL SESSION I

CHAPTER 340

An Act to amend and reenact § 3.2-6591 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 13 of Chapter 65 of Title 3.2 a section numbered 3.2-6593.1, relating to animal testing facilities; adoption of dogs and cats; civil penalty.

[S 1417]

Approved March 24, 2021

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 3.2-6591 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 13 of Chapter 65 of Title 3.2 a section numbered 3.2-6593.1 as follows:

§ 3.2-6591. Definitions.

As used in this article, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Alternative test method" means a test method that (i) provides information of equivalent or better scientific quality and relevance than animal test methods, (ii) has been identified by a validation body and adopted by the relevant federal agency or program within an agency responsible for regulating the specific product or activity for which the test is being conducted, and (iii) does not use animals, or, when there is no test method available that does not use animals, uses the fewest animals possible and reduces the level of suffering or stress, to the greatest extent possible, of an animal used for testing. "Alternative test method" includes computational toxicology and bioinformatics, high-throughput screening methods, testing of categories of chemical substances, tiered testing methods, ~~in vitro~~ *in vitro* studies, and systems biology and new or revised methods.

"Animal" means any live vertebrate nonhuman animal.

"Animal test method" means a process or procedure that uses animals to obtain information on the characteristics of a chemical or agent or the biological effect of exposure to a chemical or agent under specified conditions.

"Animal testing facility" means any facility, including a private entity, state agency, or institution of higher education, that confines and uses dogs or cats for research, education, testing, or other scientific or medical purposes.

"Contract testing facility" means any partnership, corporation, association, or other legal relationship that tests chemicals, ingredients, product formulations, or products on behalf of another entity.

"Manufacturer" means any partnership, corporation, association, or other legal entity that produces chemicals, ingredients, product formulations, or products.

"Validation body" means an organization that seeks to facilitate development, validation, and regulatory acceptance of new and revised regulatory test methods that reduce, refine, or replace the use of animals in testing, such as the Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Validation of Alternative Methods or other similar organizations.

§ 3.2-6593.1. Animal testing facilities; adoption of dogs and cats.

Any animal testing facility that no longer has need for a dog or cat in its possession that does not pose a health or safety risk to the public or welfare of the animal shall (i) offer for release such dog or cat to a releasing agency for eventual adoption or for adoption through a private placement or (ii) in the case of a testing facility operated by an agency or institution of higher education, develop its own adoption program, provided that such program maintains records that comply with § 3.2-6557. Such animal testing facility shall keep such offer for release open for a reasonable length of time, up to three weeks, prior to euthanizing such dog or cat. An animal testing facility may enter into an agreement with a releasing agency for the implementation of the provisions of this section. An animal testing facility shall not be liable for any harm caused by or any defect suffered by any dog or cat adopted pursuant to this section.