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HOUSE BILL NO. 514

Offered January 20, 1998

A BILL to amend and reenact § 3.1-796.66 of the Code of Virginia, relating to companion animals; definition.

Patron—Deeds

Referred to Committee on Agriculture

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 3.1-796.66 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 3.1-796.66. Definitions.

The following words as used in this chapter shall have the following meanings:

"Abandon" means to desert, forsake, or absolutely give up an animal without having secured another owner or custodian for the animal or by failing to provide the elements of basic care as set forth in § 3.1-796.68 for a period of five consecutive days.

"Adequate care" or "care" means the responsible practice of good animal husbandry, handling, production, management, confinement, feeding, watering, protection, shelter, transportation, treatment, and, when necessary, euthanasia, appropriate for the age, species, condition, size and type of the animal and the provision of veterinary care when needed to prevent suffering or impairment of health.

"Adequate exercise" or "exercise" means the opportunity for the animal to move sufficiently to maintain normal muscle tone and mass for the age, species, size, and condition of the animal.

"Adequate feed" means access to and the provision of food which is of sufficient quantity and nutritive value to maintain each animal in good health; is accessible to each animal; is prepared so as to permit ease of consumption for the age, species, condition, size and type of each animal; is provided in a clean and sanitary manner; is placed so as to minimize contamination by excrement and pests; and is provided at suitable intervals for the species, age, and condition of the animal, but at least once daily, except as prescribed by a veterinarian or as dictated by naturally occurring states of hibernation or fasting normal for the species.

"Adequate shelter" means provision of and access to shelter that is suitable for the species, age, condition, size, and type of each animal; provides adequate space for each animal; is safe and protects each animal from injury, rain, sleet, snow, hail, direct sunlight, the adverse effects of heat or cold, physical suffering, and impairment of health; is properly lighted; is properly cleaned; enables each animal to be clean and dry, except when detrimental to the species; and, for dogs and cats, provides a solid surface, resting platform, pad, floormat, or similar device that is large enough for the animal to lie on in a normal manner and can be maintained in a sanitary manner. Under this chapter, shelters whose wire, grid, or slat floors (i) permit the animals' feet to pass through the openings, (ii) sag under the animals' weight, or (iii) otherwise do not protect the animals' feet or toes from injury are not adequate shelter.

"Adequate space" means sufficient space to allow each animal to (i) easily stand, sit, lie, turn about, and make all other normal body movements in a comfortable, normal position for the animal and (ii) interact safely with other animals in the enclosure. When an animal is tethered, "adequate space" means a tether that permits the above actions and is appropriate to the age and size of the animal; is attached to the animal by a properly applied collar, halter, or harness configured so as to protect the animal from injury and prevent the animal or tether from becoming entangled with other objects or animals, or from extending over an object or edge that could result in the strangulation or injury of the animal; and is at least three times the length of the animal, as measured from the tip of its nose to the base of its tail, except when the animal is being walked on a leash or is attached by a tether to a lead line. When freedom of movement would endanger the animal, temporarily and appropriately restricting movement of the animal according to professionally accepted standards for the species is considered provision of adequate space.

"Adequate water" means provision of and access to clean, fresh, potable water of a drinkable temperature which (i) is provided in a suitable manner, in sufficient volume, and at suitable intervals, but at least once every twelve hours, to maintain normal hydration for the age, species, condition, size and type of each animal, except as prescribed by a veterinarian or as dictated by naturally occurring states of hibernation or fasting normal for the species; and (ii) is provided in clean, durable receptacles which are accessible to each animal and are placed so as to minimize contamination of the water by excrement and pests ~~or an~~. "Adequate water" includes alternative ~~source~~ sources of hydration provided in a form and manner consistent with generally accepted husbandry practices.

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- 60 "Adoption" means the transfer of ownership of a dog or cat from a releasing agency to an individual.
- 61 "Agricultural animals" means all livestock and poultry.
- 62 "Ambient temperature" means the temperature surrounding the animal.
- 63 "Animal" means any nonhuman vertebrate species except fish. For the purposes of § 3.1-796.98,
- 64 animal means any species susceptible to rabies. For the purposes of § 3.1-796.122, animal means any
- 65 nonhuman vertebrate species including fish except those fish captured and killed or disposed of in a
- 66 reasonable and customary manner.
- 67 "Animal shelter" means a facility which is used to house or contain animals and which is owned,
- 68 operated, or maintained by a duly incorporated humane society, animal welfare society, society for the
- 69 prevention of cruelty to animals, or other nonprofit organization devoted to the welfare, protection, and
- 70 humane treatment of animals.
- 71 "Animal warden" means any person employed, contracted, or appointed by the Commonwealth or
- 72 any political subdivision for the purpose of aiding in the enforcement of this law or any other law or
- 73 ordinance relating to the licensing of dogs, control of dogs and cats, cruelty to animals, or seizure and
- 74 impoundment of companion animals and includes any state or municipal police officer, animal control
- 75 officer, sheriff, constable, or other employee whose duties in whole or in part include assignments which
- 76 involve seizure or taking into custody of any dog or other animal.
- 77 "Board" means the Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- 78 "Boarding establishment" means a place or establishment other than a pound or animal shelter where
- 79 companion animals not owned by the proprietor are sheltered, fed, and watered in exchange for a fee.
- 80 "Collar" means a well-fitted device, appropriate to the age and size of the animal, attached to the
- 81 animal's neck in such a way as to prevent trauma or injury to the animal.
- 82 "Companion animal" means any domestic or feral dog, domestic or feral cat, non-human primate,
- 83 guinea pig, *potbellied pig*, hamster, rabbit not raised for human food or fiber, exotic or native animal,
- 84 reptile, exotic or native bird, or any feral animal or any animal under the care, custody, or ownership of
- 85 a person or any animal which is bought, sold, traded, or bartered by any person. Agricultural animals,
- 86 game species, or any animals regulated under federal law as research animals shall not be considered
- 87 companion animals for the purposes of this chapter.
- 88 "Consumer" means any natural person purchasing an animal from a dealer or pet shop or hiring the
- 89 services of a boarding establishment. The term "consumer" shall not include a business or corporation
- 90 engaged in sales or services.
- 91 "Dealer" means any person who in the regular course of business for compensation or profit buys,
- 92 sells, transfers, exchanges, or barter companion animals. Any person who transports companion animals
- 93 in the regular course of business as a common carrier shall not be considered a dealer.
- 94 "Emergency veterinary treatment" means veterinary treatment to stabilize a life-threatening condition,
- 95 alleviate suffering, prevent further disease transmission, or prevent further disease progression.
- 96 "Enclosure" means a structure used to house or restrict animals from running at large.
- 97 "Euthanasia" means the humane destruction of an animal accomplished by a method that involves
- 98 instantaneous unconsciousness and immediate death or by a method that involves anesthesia, produced
- 99 by an agent which causes painless loss of consciousness, and death during such loss of consciousness.
- 100 "Exhibitor" means any person who has animals for or on public display, excluding an exhibitor
- 101 licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture.
- 102 "Housing facility" means any room, building, or area used to contain a primary enclosure or
- 103 enclosures.
- 104 "Humane" means any action taken in consideration of and with the intent to provide for the animal's
- 105 health and well-being.
- 106 "Humane society" means any chartered, nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of this
- 107 Commonwealth and organized for the purpose of preventing cruelty to animals and promoting humane
- 108 care and treatment of animals.
- 109 "Investigator" or "humane investigator" means a natural person who is authorized to investigate
- 110 complaints of alleged violations of this chapter and who is either (i) employed by the Virginia
- 111 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and is under the direction of the State Veterinarian or
- 112 (ii) has met the training requirements and qualifications required by regulations promulgated pursuant to
- 113 § 3.1-796.106 and who has a valid court order of appointment as a humane investigator for the
- 114 jurisdiction in which official actions are being taken and which was issued in accordance with the
- 115 provisions of §§ 3.1-796.109 and 3.1-796.110.
- 116 "Kennel" means any establishment in which five or more canines, felines, or hybrids of either are
- 117 kept for the purpose of breeding, hunting, training, renting, buying, boarding, selling, or showing.
- 118 "Livestock" includes all domestic or domesticated: bovine animals; equine animals; ovine animals;
- 119 porcine animals *other than potbellied pigs*; cervidae animals; caprae animals; animals of the genus
- 120 Lama; ratites; fish or shellfish in aquaculture facilities, as defined in § 3.1-73.6; enclosed domesticated
- 121 rabbits or hares raised for human food or fiber; or any other individual animal specifically raised for

food or fiber, except companion animals.

"Local ordinance" means any law, rule, regulation, or ordinance promulgated by the governing body of any county, city, or town.

"New owner" means an individual who is legally competent to enter into a binding agreement pursuant to subdivision B 2 of § 3.1-796.126:1, and who adopts or receives a dog or cat from a releasing agency.

"Other officer" includes all other persons employed or elected by the people of Virginia, or by any municipality, county, or incorporated town thereof, whose duty it is to preserve the peace, to make arrests, or to enforce the law.

"Owner" means any person who: (i) has a right of property in an animal, (ii) keeps or harbors an animal, (iii) has an animal in his care, or (iv) acts as a custodian of an animal.

"Person" means any individual, partnership, firm, joint-stock company, corporation, association, trust, estate, or other legal entity.

"Pet shop" means an establishment where companion animals are bought, sold, exchanged, or offered for sale or exchange to the general public.

"Poultry" includes all domestic fowl and game birds raised in captivity.

"Pound" means a facility operated by the Commonwealth, or any political subdivision, for the purpose of impounding or harboring seized, stray, homeless, abandoned, or unwanted animals; or a facility operated for the same purpose under a contract with any county, city, town, or incorporated society for the prevention of cruelty to animals.

"Primary enclosure" means any structure used to immediately restrict an animal or animals to a limited amount of space, such as a room, pen, cage, compartment, or hutch. For tethered animals, the term includes the shelter and the area within reach of the tether.

"Properly cleaned" means that carcasses, debris, food waste and excrement are removed from the primary enclosure with sufficient frequency to minimize the animals' contact with the above-mentioned contaminants; the primary enclosure is sanitized with sufficient frequency to minimize odors and the hazards of disease; and the primary enclosure is cleaned so as to prevent the animals confined therein from being directly or indirectly sprayed with the stream of water, or directly or indirectly exposed to hazardous chemicals or disinfectants.

"Properly lighted" means sufficient illumination to permit routine inspections, maintenance, cleaning, and housekeeping of the shelter, and observation of the animal; to provide regular diurnal lighting cycles of either natural or artificial light, uniformly diffused throughout the animal facilities; and to promote the well-being of the animals.

"Releasing agency" means a pound, animal shelter, humane society, animal welfare society, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or other similar entity that releases a dog or cat for adoption pursuant to Article 6.1 (§ 3.1-796.126:1 et seq.) of this chapter.

"Research facility" means any place, laboratory, or institution licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at which scientific tests, experiments, or investigations involving the use of living animals are carried out, conducted, or attempted.

"Sanitize" means to make physically clean and to remove and destroy, to a practical minimum, agents injurious to health.

"State Veterinarian" means the veterinarian employed by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services as provided in § 3.1-723.

"Sterilize" or "sterilization" means a surgical or chemical procedure performed by a licensed veterinarian that renders a dog or cat permanently incapable of reproducing.

"Treasurer" includes the treasurer and his assistants of each county or city or other officer designated by law to collect taxes in such county or city.

"Treatment" or "adequate treatment" means the responsible handling or transportation of animals in the person's ownership, custody or charge, appropriate for the age, species, condition, size and type of the animal.

"Veterinary treatment" means treatment by or on the order of a duly licensed veterinarian.

"Weaned" means that an animal is capable of and physiologically accustomed to ingestion of solid food or food customary for the adult of the species, and has ingested such food, without nursing, for a period of at least five days.