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HOUSE BILL NO. 884

Offered January 13, 2010

Prefiled January 13, 2010

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 3.2-6555 of the Code of Virginia, relating to animal welfare laws; special deputies.*

Patron—Athey

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 3.2-6555 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 3.2-6555. Position of animal control officer created.

The governing body of each county or city shall, or each town may, employ an officer to be known as the animal control officer who shall have the power to enforce this chapter, all ordinances enacted pursuant to this chapter and all laws for the protection of domestic animals. *Sheriffs and police chiefs may also designate and utilize volunteer deputies for the enforcement of this chapter, all ordinances enacted pursuant to this chapter, and all laws for the protection of domestic animals.* The governing body may also employ one or more deputy animal control officers to assist the animal control officer in the performance of his duties. Animal control officers and deputy animal control officers shall have knowledge of the animal control and protection laws of the Commonwealth that they are required to enforce. When in uniform or upon displaying a badge or other credentials of office, animal control officers and deputy animal control officers shall have the power to issue a summons or obtain a felony warrant as necessary, providing the execution of such warrant shall be carried out by any law-enforcement officer as defined in § 9.1-101, to any person found in the act of violating any such law or any ordinance enacted pursuant to such law of the locality where the animal control officer or deputy animal control officer is employed. Commercial dog breeding locations shall be subject to inspection by animal control at least twice annually and additionally upon receipt of a complaint or their own motion to ensure compliance with state animal care laws and regulations. The animal control officer and the deputy animal control officers shall be paid as the governing body of each locality shall prescribe.

Any locality where an animal control officer or deputy animal control officers have been employed may contract with one or more additional localities for enforcement of animal protection and control laws by the animal control officers or deputy animal control officers. Any such contract may provide that the locality employing the animal control officer or deputy animal control officers shall be reimbursed a portion of the salary and expenses of the animal control officer or deputy animal control officers.

Every locality employing an animal control officer shall submit to the State Veterinarian, on a form provided by him, information concerning the employment and training status of the animal control officers employed by the locality. The State Veterinarian may require that the locality notify him of any change in such information.