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SENATE BILL NO. 1390

Senate Amendments in [ ] - February 1, 2021

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 3.2-6500, 3.2-6524, 3.2-6546, and 3.2-6551 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 3.2-6579.1, relating to cats; trap, neuter, and return programs; civil penalty.

Patron Prior to Engrossment—Senator Lewis

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 3.2-6500, 3.2-6524, 3.2-6546, and 3.2-6551 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 3.2-6579.1 as follows:

§ 3.2-6500. Definitions.

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

"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 § 3.2-6503 for a period of four consecutive days. "Abandon" shall not include the return of a community cat by a TNR program volunteer.

"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 that 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; during hot weather, is properly shaded and does not readily conduct heat; during cold weather, has a windbreak at its entrance and provides a quantity of bedding material consisting of hay, cedar shavings, or the equivalent that is sufficient to protect the animal from cold and promote the retention of body heat; 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. The outdoor tethering of an animal shall not constitute the provision of adequate shelter (a) unless the animal is safe from predators and well suited and well equipped to tolerate its environment; (b) during the effective period for a hurricane warning or tropical storm warning issued for the area by the National Weather Service; or (c)(1) during a heat advisory issued by a local or state authority, (2) when the actual or effective outdoor temperature is 85 degrees Fahrenheit or higher or 32 degrees Fahrenheit or lower, or (3) during the effective period for a severe weather warning issued for the area by the National Weather Service, including a winter storm, tornado, or severe thunderstorm warning, unless an animal control officer, having inspected an animal's individual circumstances in clause (c)(1), (2), or (3), has determined the animal to be safe from predators and well suited and well equipped to tolerate its environment.

"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 that the tether to which the animal is attached permits the above actions and is appropriate to the age

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59 and size of the animal; is attached to the animal by a properly applied collar, halter, or harness that is  
60 configured so as to protect the animal from injury and prevent the animal or tether from becoming  
61 entangled with other objects or animals, or from extending over an object or edge that could result in  
62 the strangulation or injury of the animal; is at least 15 feet in length or four times the length of the  
63 animal, as measured from the tip of its nose to the base of its tail, whichever is greater, except when the  
64 animal is being walked on a leash or is attached by a tether to a lead line or when an animal control  
65 officer, having inspected an animal's individual circumstances, has determined that in such an individual  
66 case, a tether of at least 10 feet or three times the length of the animal, but shorter than 15 feet or four  
67 times the length of the animal, makes the animal more safe, more suited, and better equipped to tolerate  
68 its environment than a longer tether; does not, by its material, size, or weight or any other characteristic,  
69 cause injury or pain to the animal; does not weigh more than one-tenth of the animal's body weight; and  
70 does not have weights or other heavy objects attached to it. The walking of an animal on a leash by its  
71 owner shall not constitute the tethering of the animal for the purpose of this definition. When freedom  
72 of movement would endanger the animal, temporarily and appropriately restricting movement of the  
73 animal according to professionally accepted standards for the species is considered provision of adequate  
74 space. The provisions of this definition that relate to tethering shall not apply to agricultural animals.

75 "Adequate water" means provision of and access to clean, fresh, potable water of a drinkable  
76 temperature that is provided in a suitable manner, in sufficient volume, and at suitable intervals  
77 appropriate for the weather and temperature, to maintain normal hydration for the age, species,  
78 condition, size and type of each animal, except as prescribed by a veterinarian or as dictated by  
79 naturally occurring states of hibernation or fasting normal for the species; and is provided in clean,  
80 durable receptacles that are accessible to each animal and are placed so as to minimize contamination of  
81 the water by excrement and pests or an alternative source of hydration consistent with generally  
82 accepted husbandry practices.

83 "Adoption" means the transfer of ownership of a dog or a cat, or any other companion animal, from  
84 a releasing agency to an individual.

85 "Agricultural animals" means all livestock and poultry.

86 "Ambient temperature" means the temperature surrounding the animal.

87 "Animal" means any nonhuman vertebrate species except fish. For the purposes of § 3.2-6522, animal  
88 means any species susceptible to rabies. For the purposes of § 3.2-6570, animal means any nonhuman  
89 vertebrate species including fish except those fish captured and killed or disposed of in a reasonable and  
90 customary manner.

91 "Animal control officer" means a person appointed as an animal control officer or deputy animal  
92 control officer as provided in § 3.2-6555.

93 "Boarding establishment" means a place or establishment other than a public or private animal shelter  
94 where companion animals not owned by the proprietor are sheltered, fed, and watered in exchange for a  
95 fee. "Boarding establishment" shall not include any private residential dwelling that shelters, feeds, and  
96 waters fewer than five companion animals not owned by the proprietor.

97 "Collar" means a well-fitted device, appropriate to the age and size of the animal, attached to the  
98 animal's neck in such a way as to prevent trauma or injury to the animal.

99 "Commercial dog breeder" means any person who, during any 12-month period, maintains 30 or  
100 more adult female dogs for the primary purpose of the sale of their offspring provided that a person  
101 who breeds an animal regulated under federal law as a research animal shall not be deemed to be a  
102 commercial dog breeder.

103 "*Community cat*" means a domestic or feral, outdoor, free-roaming cat that is (i) unowned or (ii)  
104 lost or abandoned and whose owner cannot be ascertained from a microchip, tag, license, collar, tattoo,  
105 or other visible form of identification.

106 "Companion animal" means any domestic or feral dog, domestic or feral cat, nonhuman primate,  
107 guinea pig, hamster, rabbit not raised for human food or fiber, exotic or native animal, reptile, exotic or  
108 native bird, or any feral animal or any animal under the care, custody, or ownership of a person or any  
109 animal that is bought, sold, traded, or bartered by any person. No agricultural animal, game species, or  
110 animal regulated under federal law as a research animal shall be considered a companion animal for the  
111 purposes of this chapter.

112 "Consumer" means any natural person purchasing an animal from a dealer or pet shop or hiring the  
113 services of a boarding establishment. The term "consumer" shall not include a business or corporation  
114 engaged in sales or services.

115 "Dealer" means any person who in the regular course of business for compensation or profit buys,  
116 sells, transfers, exchanges, or barter companion animals. The following shall not be considered dealers:  
117 (i) any person who transports companion animals in the regular course of business as a common carrier  
118 or (ii) any person whose primary purpose is to find permanent adoptive homes for companion animals.

119 "Direct and immediate threat" means any clear and imminent danger to an animal's health, safety or  
120 life.

121 "Dump" means to knowingly desert, forsake, or absolutely give up without having secured another  
 122 owner or custodian any dog, cat, or other companion animal in any public place including the  
 123 right-of-way of any public highway, road or street or on the property of another.

124 "Emergency veterinary treatment" means veterinary treatment to stabilize a life-threatening condition,  
 125 alleviate suffering, prevent further disease transmission, or prevent further disease progression.

126 "Enclosure" means a structure used to house or restrict animals from running at large.

127 "Euthanasia" means the humane destruction of an animal accomplished by a method that involves  
 128 instantaneous unconsciousness and immediate death or by a method that involves anesthesia, produced  
 129 by an agent that causes painless loss of consciousness, and death during such loss of consciousness.

130 "Exhibitor" means any person who has animals for or on public display, excluding an exhibitor  
 131 licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

132 "Facility" means a building or portion thereof as designated by the State Veterinarian, other than a  
 133 private residential dwelling and its surrounding grounds, that is used to contain a primary enclosure or  
 134 enclosures in which animals are housed or kept.

135 "Farming activity" means, consistent with standard animal husbandry practices, the raising,  
 136 management, and use of agricultural animals to provide food, fiber, or transportation and the breeding,  
 137 exhibition, lawful recreational use, marketing, transportation, and slaughter of agricultural animals  
 138 pursuant to such purposes.

139 "Foster care provider" means a person who provides care or rehabilitation for companion animals  
 140 through an affiliation with a public or private animal shelter, home-based rescue, releasing agency, or  
 141 other animal welfare organization.

142 "Foster home" means a private residential dwelling and its surrounding grounds, or any facility other  
 143 than a public or private animal shelter, at which site through an affiliation with a public or private  
 144 animal shelter, home-based rescue, releasing agency, or other animal welfare organization care or  
 145 rehabilitation is provided for companion animals.

146 "Groomer" means any person who, for a fee, cleans, trims, brushes, makes neat, manicures, or treats  
 147 for external parasites any animal.

148 "Home-based rescue" means an animal welfare organization that takes custody of companion animals  
 149 for the purpose of facilitating adoption and houses such companion animals in a foster home or a  
 150 system of foster homes.

151 "Humane" means any action taken in consideration of and with the intent to provide for the animal's  
 152 health and well-being.

153 "Humane investigator" means a person who has been appointed by a circuit court as a humane  
 154 investigator as provided in § 3.2-6558.

155 "Humane society" means any incorporated, nonprofit organization that is organized for the purposes  
 156 of preventing cruelty to animals and promoting humane care and treatment or adoptions of animals.

157 "Incorporated" means organized and maintained as a legal entity in the Commonwealth.

158 "Inspector" means a State Animal Welfare Inspector employed pursuant to § 3.2-5901.1 or his  
 159 representative.

160 "Kennel" means any establishment in which five or more canines, felines, or hybrids of either are  
 161 kept for the purpose of breeding, hunting, training, renting, buying, boarding, selling, or showing.

162 "Law-enforcement officer" means any person who is a full-time or part-time employee of a police  
 163 department or sheriff's office that is part of or administered by the Commonwealth or any political  
 164 subdivision thereof and who is responsible for the prevention and detection of crime and the  
 165 enforcement of the penal, traffic or highway laws of the Commonwealth. Part-time employees are  
 166 compensated officers who are not full-time employees as defined by the employing police department or  
 167 sheriff's office.

168 "Livestock" includes all domestic or domesticated: bovine animals; equine animals; ovine animals;  
 169 porcine animals; cervidae animals; capradae animals; animals of the genus Lama or Vicugna; ratites; fish  
 170 or shellfish in aquaculture facilities, as defined in § 3.2-2600; enclosed domesticated rabbits or hares  
 171 raised for human food or fiber; or any other individual animal specifically raised for food or fiber,  
 172 except companion animals.

173 "New owner" means an individual who is legally competent to enter into a binding agreement  
 174 pursuant to subdivision B 2 of § 3.2-6574, and who adopts or receives a dog or cat from a releasing  
 175 agency.

176 "Ordinance" means any law, rule, regulation, or ordinance adopted by the governing body of any  
 177 locality.

178 "Other officer" includes all other persons employed or elected by the people of Virginia, or by any  
 179 locality, whose duty it is to preserve the peace, to make arrests, or to enforce the law.

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

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

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

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

188 "Private animal shelter" means a facility operated for the purpose of finding permanent adoptive  
189 homes for animals that is used to house or contain animals and that is owned or operated by an  
190 incorporated, nonprofit, and nongovernmental entity, including a humane society, animal welfare  
191 organization, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or any other similar organization.

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

198 "Properly lighted" when referring to a facility means sufficient illumination to permit routine  
199 inspections, maintenance, cleaning, and housekeeping of the facility, and observation of the animals; to  
200 provide regular diurnal lighting cycles of either natural or artificial light, uniformly diffused throughout  
201 the facility; and to promote the well-being of the animals.

202 "Properly lighted" when referring to a private residential dwelling and its surrounding grounds means  
203 sufficient illumination to permit routine maintenance and cleaning thereof, and observation of the  
204 companion animals; and to provide regular diurnal lighting cycles of either natural or artificial light to  
205 promote the well-being of the animals.

206 "Public animal shelter" means a facility operated by the Commonwealth, or any locality, for the  
207 purpose of impounding or sheltering seized, stray, homeless, abandoned, unwanted, or surrendered  
208 animals or a facility operated for the same purpose under a contract with any locality.

209 "Releasing agency" means (i) a public animal shelter or (ii) a private animal shelter, humane society,  
210 animal welfare organization, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or other similar entity or  
211 home-based rescue that releases companion animals for adoption.

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

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

217 "Sore" means, when referring to an equine, that an irritating or blistering agent has been applied,  
218 internally or externally, by a person to any limb or foot of an equine; any burn, cut, or laceration that  
219 has been inflicted by a person to any limb or foot of an equine; any tack, nail, screw, or chemical agent  
220 that has been injected by a person into or used by a person on any limb or foot of an equine; any other  
221 substance or device that has been used by a person on any limb or foot of an equine; or a person has  
222 engaged in a practice involving an equine, and as a result of such application, infliction, injection, use,  
223 or practice, such equine suffers, or can reasonably be expected to suffer, physical pain or distress,  
224 inflammation, or lameness when walking, trotting, or otherwise moving, except that such term does not  
225 include such an application, infliction, injection, use, or practice in connection with the therapeutic  
226 treatment of an equine by or under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian. Notwithstanding anything  
227 contained herein to the contrary, nothing shall preclude the shoeing, use of pads, and use of action  
228 devices as permitted by 9 C.F.R. Part 11.2.

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

231 "TNR program" means a program, otherwise known as trap, neuter, and return (TNR), for the  
232 temporary capture, provision of treatment, and return to the same approximate location as captured of  
233 any community cat. In addition to procedures for sterilization and vaccination against rabies, such  
234 program may include provision of urgent veterinary treatment. Such program shall ensure that (i) all  
235 vaccines are administered in accordance with a protocol approved by a licensed veterinarian and (ii)  
236 rabies vaccines are administered by a licensed veterinarian or licensed veterinary technician under the  
237 immediate direction and supervision of a licensed veterinarian in accordance with § 3.2-6521.

238 "TNR program volunteer" means any person who temporarily captures and returns to the same  
239 approximate location a community cat in accordance with a TNR program.

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

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

244 the animal.

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

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

249 **§ 3.2-6524. Unlicensed dogs prohibited; ordinances for licensing cats.**

250 A. It shall be unlawful for any person other than a releasing agency that has registered as such  
251 annually with local animal control to own a dog four months old or older in the Commonwealth unless  
252 such dog is licensed, as required by the provisions of this article.

253 B. The governing body of any locality may, by ordinance, prohibit any person other than a releasing  
254 agency that has registered as such annually with local animal control from owning a cat four months old  
255 or older within such locality unless such cat is licensed as provided by this article.

256 C. *The provisions of this section shall not apply to the temporary capture and return of a community  
257 cat by a TNR program volunteer.*

258 **§ 3.2-6546. County or city public animal shelters; confinement and disposition of animals;  
259 affiliation with foster care providers; penalties; injunctive relief.**

260 A. For purposes of this section:

261 "Animal" shall not include agricultural animals.

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

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

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

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

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

277 4. The public animal shelter shall maintain a written record of the information on each companion  
278 animal submitted to the shelter by a private animal shelter in accordance with subsection D of  
279 § 3.2-6548 for a period of 30 days from the date the information is received by the shelter. If a person  
280 contacts the shelter inquiring about a lost companion animal, the shelter shall check its records and  
281 make available to such person any information submitted by a private animal shelter or allow such  
282 person inquiring about a lost animal to view the written records;

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

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

296 C. An animal confined pursuant to this section, *other than a community cat brought to a public  
297 animal shelter pursuant to a TNR program*, shall be kept for a period of not less than five days, such  
298 stray hold period to commence on the day immediately following the day the animal is initially confined  
299 in the facility, unless sooner claimed by the rightful owner thereof.

300 The operator or custodian of the public animal shelter shall make a reasonable effort to ascertain  
301 whether the animal has a collar, tag, license, tattoo, or other form of identification. If such identification  
302 is found on the animal, the animal shall be held for an additional five-day stray hold period, unless  
303 sooner claimed by the rightful owner. If the rightful owner of the animal can be readily identified, the  
304 operator or custodian of the shelter shall make a reasonable effort to notify the owner of the animal's

305 confinement within the next 48 hours following its confinement.

306 During the stray hold period that an animal is confined pursuant to this subsection, the operator or  
307 custodian of the public animal shelter may vaccinate the animal to prevent the risk of communicable  
308 diseases, provided that (i) all vaccines are administered in accordance with a protocol approved by a  
309 licensed veterinarian and (ii) rabies vaccines are administered by a licensed veterinarian or licensed  
310 veterinary technician under the immediate direction and supervision of a licensed veterinarian in  
311 accordance with § 3.2-6521. Indoor enclosures used to confine the animal during the applicable stray  
312 hold period shall be constructed of materials that are durable, nonporous, impervious to moisture, and  
313 able to be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. During the applicable stray hold period, the operator or  
314 custodian shall provide the animal with adequate care, including reasonable access to outdoor areas to  
315 ensure that the animal has adequate exercise and adequate space.

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

321 D. If an animal confined pursuant to this section has not been claimed upon expiration of the  
322 applicable stray hold period as provided by subsection C, it shall be deemed abandoned and become the  
323 property of the public animal shelter.

324 For any animal not subject to a stray hold period, including an animal for whom the stray hold  
325 period has ended, the operator or custodian of the public animal shelter shall confine the animal in an  
326 enclosure that can safely house and allow for adequate separation of animals of different species, sexes,  
327 ages, and temperaments. Such enclosure may have both an outdoor area and an indoor area. If the  
328 facility has an outdoor area, the facility shall ensure that the outdoor areas do not present conditions that  
329 would be detrimental to the health of the animal. Indoor areas shall have a solid floor. Each operator or  
330 custodian shall ensure adequate access to water, food, and a resting platform, bedding, or perch as  
331 appropriate to the animal's species, age, and condition. Any regulation by the Board that applies to an  
332 animal not subject to a stray hold period shall not be so restrictive as to fail to allow for adequate care,  
333 adequate exercise, and adequate space, including meaningful indoor and outdoor recreation for the  
334 animal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

365 For purposes of recordkeeping, release of an animal by a public animal shelter to a public or private  
366 animal shelter or other releasing agency shall be considered a transfer and not an adoption. If the animal

367 is not first sterilized, the responsibility for sterilizing the animal transfers to the receiving entity.  
 368 Any proceeds deriving from the gift, sale, or delivery of such animals shall be paid directly to the  
 369 treasurer of the locality. Any proceeds deriving from the gift, sale, or delivery of such animals by a  
 370 public or private animal shelter or other releasing agency shall be paid directly to the clerk or treasurer  
 371 of the animal shelter or other releasing agency for the expenses of the society and expenses incident to  
 372 any agreement concerning the disposing of such animal. No part of the proceeds shall accrue to any  
 373 individual except for the aforementioned purposes.

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

377 F. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the immediate euthanasia or disposal by the methods listed in  
 378 subdivisions D 1 through 5 of an animal that has been released to a public or private animal shelter,  
 379 other releasing agency, or animal control officer by the animal's rightful owner after the rightful owner  
 380 has read and signed a statement: (i) surrendering all property rights in such animal; (ii) stating that no  
 381 other person has a right of property in the animal; and (iii) acknowledging that the animal may be  
 382 immediately euthanized or disposed of in accordance with subdivisions D 1 through 5.

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

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

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

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

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

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

416 **§ 3.2-6551. Notification by individuals finding companion animals; penalty.**

417 A. Any individual who finds a companion animal and (i) provides care or safekeeping or (ii) retains  
 418 the companion animal in such a manner as to control its activities shall within 48 hours:

419 1. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the owner of the companion animal if the owner can be  
 420 ascertained from any tag, license, collar, tattoo, or other form of identification or markings or if the  
 421 owner of the animal is otherwise known to the individual; and

422 2. Notify the public animal shelter that serves the locality where the companion animal was found  
 423 and provide to the shelter contact information, including at least a name and a contact telephone  
 424 number, a description of the animal, including information from any tag, license, collar, tattoo, or other  
 425 identification or markings, and the location where the companion animal was found.

426 B. If an individual finds a companion animal and (i) provides care or safekeeping or (ii) retains the  
 427 companion animal in such a manner as to control its activities, the individual shall comply with the

428 provisions of § 3.2-6503.

429 C. *The provisions of this section shall not apply to the temporary capture and return of a community*  
430 *cat by a TNR program volunteer.*

431 D. Any individual who violates this section may be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed \$50 per  
432 companion animal.

433 **§ 3.2-6579.1. Trap, neuter, and return programs.**

434 A. *Notwithstanding the provisions of §§ 3.2-6546, 3.2-6548, and 3.2-6549, any public or private*  
435 *animal shelter, releasing agency, or hospital or clinic that is operated under the immediate supervision*  
436 *of a duly licensed veterinarian may operate a TNR program.*

437 B. *A TNR program authorized pursuant to subsection A shall comply with the following provisions:*

438 1. *Any trap used for the TNR program shall be identified with the name and contact information of*  
439 *the TNR program volunteer or the organization with which the TNR program volunteer is working;*

440 2. *Any [ set ] TNR program trap [ set ] shall be checked at a minimum every 60 minutes;*

441 3. *Any animal that is not a community cat and is unintentionally caught in a trap set for a TNR*  
442 *program shall be immediately released [ ~~from the trap~~ at the location where trapped ] ;*

443 4. *The following records shall be kept for each community cat in a TNR program: (i) the general*  
444 *location of capture and a general description of the cat, (ii) the veterinarian-issued rabies certificate,*  
445 *and (iii) a written confirmation of sterilization by the veterinarian who performed the sterilization; and*

446 5. *In the event of a rabies outbreak involving community cats in a TNR program, rabies vaccination*  
447 *records for the community cats in the TNR program shall be disclosed upon request by animal control*  
448 *or public health officials.*

449 C. *The civil penalties that apply to this section pursuant to § 3.2-6580 shall not exceed \$150.*