



A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4996 AS INTRODUCED 6-26-91

The bill would create a new act to regulate the possession, transportation, sale and breeding of domestic ferrets and would provide for the licensing of persons who handled and bred them for commercial purposes. Under the bill, a person could only possess a domestic ferret if he or she held a permit as provided in the bill. However, if a domestic ferret was kept as a pet and neutered before it was more than 7 months old, surgically descented, inoculated as required by the Department of Natural Resources, and if an owner held proof of an animal's inoculation and complied with the bill's other requirements and any rules promulgated under the bill, a permit would not be required. The bill also would repeal Public Act 277 of 1927, which currently regulates the possession, handling and sale of ferrets.

Requirements for Owning Breedable Ferrets. A person who owned one or more breedable domestic ferrets ("breeders") would have to obtain a breeder's permit from the DNR prior to taking possession of the animal(s). If obtaining a permit prior to taking possession was not feasible, a permit would have to be obtained within 30 days after possession was taken. The bill would establish three permit classifications based on the number of breeders owned, and the cost of a permit would vary as follows:

- * for 1 to 10 breeders, \$25;
- * for 11 to 100 breeders, \$250; and
- * for over 100 breeders, \$1,000.

A breeder's permit would have to be renewed every five years from the date of its original issuance or within 30 days after a person moved to a different classification level. If level change occurred prior to a person's five-year renewal date, the renewal date on his or her permit would be moved to five years after the new classification status began. After a permit was issued the DNR could not refund a permit fee unless application for a permit was denied. Facilities used to breed ferrets would have to be open for departmental inspection at any time and would have to comply with minimum standards established via rules promulgated by the department. The department would have to promulgate rules governing minimum standards for such facilities pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act.

Inoculation records would have to be kept for each breedable domestic ferret owned, and such an animal would have to be secured on a leash or in a cage when taken from the confines of an owner's home.

Sale of Domestic Ferrets. Before a person could sell or contract to sell any domestic ferrets, he or she would have to obtain a valid retailer's permit from the DNR. The permit would cost \$50 and would have to be renewed every five years from the original date of issuance. After a permit was issued the department could not refund the permit fee unless the permit application was denied. If a domestic ferret was sold, the retailer would have to give to the buyer all of the following:

- * evidence that the animal had been neutered and surgically descented;
- * a health certificate that at least showed the identity of the original breeder and the animal's inoculation history;
- * a one-page information sheet that described various health and nutritional needs of the animal; and
- * a signed and dated statement saying that the health and nutritional information was being provided in order to comply with the bill's requirements.

Violations. A person who violated the bill's requirements would be guilty of a misdemeanor and could be imprisoned for up to 90 days, fined not less than \$250 or more than \$500, or both, together with the costs of prosecution. Also, the court would have to order that a domestic ferret possessed or transported illegally would have to be confiscated and disposed of in a manner approved by the DNR director.