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DISPOSITION OF ABANDONED ANIMALS

House Bill 4903
Sponsor: Rep. Gerald Law
Committee: Health Policy

Complete to 10-19-99

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 4903 AS INTRODUCED 9-28-99

The bill would amend Part 188 of the Public Health Code, entitled "Veterinary Medicine", to revise the definition of abandonment of an animal by its owner. Under the bill, an "owner" would be the actual owner of an animal, an agent of the owner, or a person with the apparent authority to act as the owner of an animal or agent of an owner. "Animal" is currently defined in the code as an animal other than a human being and includes all fowl, birds, fish, and reptiles, wild or domestic, living or dead, which could be carriers of infectious diseases. An animal would be considered "abandoned by its owner" if any of the following occurred:

*An owner failed to reclaim an animal from a veterinarian at the scheduled time or at the completion of treatment, boarding, or other services.

* An owner refused to accept custody of an animal that had been left with a veterinarian for treatment, boarding, or other services.

* The owner failed to provide payment for treatment, boarding, or other services as agreed upon by the owner and the veterinarian.

Currently, a veterinarian may dispose of an animal in his or her care if the animal had been abandoned for at least ten days. The code requires a veterinarian to send written notices by certified mail to the owner of the intent to dispose of the animal. A second notice cannot be sent until ten days after the first notice was sent. Five days after the second notice is sent, the veterinarian may dispose of the animal. The bill instead would allow the veterinarian to send out the first notice as soon as the animal was not picked up at the scheduled time, and to send out the second notice five days later. As is current law, the animal could be disposed of five days after the second notice was sent.

MCL 333.18802 and 333.18838

Analyst: S. Stutzky

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