

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Griffin Roberge 271-3042

HB 249, relative to animal shelter facilities.

Hearing Date: April 19, 2021.

Time Opened: 1:31 p.m.

Time Closed: 1:40 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Avard, Gray, Watters and Perkins Kwoka.

Members of the Committee Absent: Senator Giuda.

Bill Analysis: This bill:

I. Allows animal shelters to own or lease their facilities.

II. Clarifies which exemptions apply to animal shelters.

Sponsors:

Rep. Pearl

Rep. Lang

Rep. Moffett

Who supports the bill: Representative Peter Bixby, Strafford - District 17; Barb Burri; Kate Champney; Christine Cote; Gail Demasi; Karen Dewey; Cynthia Eliason; Joan Eversole; Kathy Farley; Angela Ferrari, Dog Owners of the Granite State; Marla Fields; Nancy Holmes, New Boston, NH; Holly Lewis; Ara Lynn; Marlene Moore; Lana Nickerson; Stacey Ober, American Kennel Club; Gail Paludi; Representative Howard Pearl, Merrimack - District 26; Diane Richardson; Kalla Robb; Michael Robb; Patty Robb; Erick Sawtelle, Lee, NH; Raymond Schwartz; Sheryl Skidmore; Susan Willumsen; Ellen Yenawine; Joseph Zalewski.

Who opposes the bill: None.

Who is neutral on the bill: Kurt Ehrenburg, Humane Society of the United States.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Howard Pearl

Merrimack – District 26

- HB 249 is a reintroduction of HB 1187 (2020). HB 1187 was recommended “ought to pass with amendment” out of the House Environment and Agriculture Committee by a vote of 20-0. The committee placed the bill on the House consent calendar. The full House adopted the committee’s recommendation on a voice vote. However, the bill was tabled in the Senate and died there due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the suspension of legislative activity.
- Section 1 amends the definition of an animal shelter facility in RSA 437:1, I to include leased facilities. There are some leased animal shelter facilities around the state. Making this change to RSA 437:1, I will ensure those facilities are covered by state statute.
- Section 2 requires the following:

- All dogs, cats, or ferrets transferred out of an animal shelter facility have a form of positive identification approved by the Commissioner of the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food (DAMF).
- All dogs, cats, or ferrets 3 months of age or older be vaccinated against rabies in accordance with RSA 436:100 before transfer from an animal shelter facility, if proof of rabies vaccination is not available.
- Animal shelter facilities contact registered owners or agents of unclaimed or abandoned animals within 72 hours.
- Secondary owners of unclaimed or abandoned animals be contacted by animal shelter facilities within 72 hours if listed owners or agents cannot be located or refuse to reclaim possession of the animal.
- No animal shelter facilities transfer any dog, cat, or ferret that is received from outside of the state without an official health certificate and until the quarantine requirements in RSA 437:8, IV have been met.
- Senator Watters referenced page 1, lines 13-16 that outlined the positive forms of identification that animals must have when transferred out of an animal shelter facility. In that section, a form of positive identification includes a tattoo, collar, microchip, ear tag, or any other permanent form of identification approved by the DAMF Commissioner. Senator Watters asked if a collar was a permanent form of identification.
 - Representative Pearl said HB 249 requires that a dog, cat, or ferret have a positive form of identification when transferred out of an animal shelter facility. A collar may not technically be a permanent form of identification, but it is a positive form of identification.
- Senator Watters said HB 249 gave some authority to the DAMF Commissioner. Senator Watters asked if there was any consideration to require the DAMF to undertake administrative rulemaking to outline how the DAMF Commissioner made those decisions.
 - Representative Pearl said the DAMF Commissioner did not feel there was a need for administrative rulemaking for the provisions under HB 249.

Stacey Ober – provided written testimony

Legislative Analyst and Community Outreach Coordinator, American Kennel Club

- Reiterated Representative Pearl's testimony in support of HB 249.

Angela Ferrari

Dog Owners of the Granite State

- Reiterated Representative Pearl's testimony in support of HB 249.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None.

Neutral Information Presented: None.

GJR

Date Hearing Report completed: April 19, 2021.