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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

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A N A C T

RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY - DOGS

Introduced By: Senators Tassoni, Lynch, Perry, and Pinga

Date Introduced: January 11, 2012

Referred To: Senate Environment & Agriculture

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Section 4-13-1.2 of the General Laws in Chapter 4-13 entitled "Dogs" is  
2 hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **4-13-1.2. Definitions.** -- (1) "Board" means the rabies control board.

4           (2) "Department" means the department of environmental management or its successor.

5           (3) "Director" means the director of the department of environmental management (or its  
6 successor) or his or her designee.

7           (4) "Division" means the division of agriculture.

8           (5) "Livestock" means domesticated animals which are commonly held in moderate  
9 contact with humans which include, but are not limited to, cattle, bison, equines, sheep, goats,  
10 llamas, and swine.

11           (6) "Owner keeper" means any person or agency keeping, harboring or having charge or  
12 control of or responsibility for control of an animal or any person or agency which permits any  
13 dog, cat, ferret, or domestic animal to habitually be fed within that person's yard or premises. This  
14 term shall not apply to veterinary facilities, any licensed boarding kennel, municipal pound, pet  
15 shop, or animal shelter.

16           (7) "Person" means an individual, firm, joint stock company, partnership, association,  
17 private or municipal corporation, trust, estate, state, commission, political subdivision, any  
18 interstate body, the federal government or any agency or subdivision of the federal government,  
19 other government entity, or other legal entity.

1 (8) "Pets" means domesticated animals kept in close contact with humans, which  
2 include, but may not be limited to dogs, cats, ferrets, equines, llamas, goats, sheep, and swine.

3 (9) "Quarantine" means the removal, isolation, the close confinement or related measures  
4 of an animal under conditions and for time periods that are set by regulation of the board.

5 (10) "Guardian" shall mean a person(s) having the same rights and responsibilities of an  
6 owner, keeper and both terms shall be used interchangeably. A guardian shall also mean a person  
7 who possesses, has title to or an interest in, harbors or has control, custody or possession of an  
8 animal and who is responsible for an animal's safety and well-being.

9 (11) "Tether" means the practice of fastening a dog to a stationary object or stake by a  
10 chain, rope or other tethering device as a means of keeping the animal under control. The term  
11 tether does not refer to the periods when an animal is walked on a leash.

12 (12) "Outdoor housing facility" means a structure that is the proper size for the dog,  
13 impervious to moisture, has protection from the direct rays of the sun, and has a wind break at the  
14 entrance. This includes, but is not limited to, dog houses, barns, garages and sheds.

15 (13) "Person having charge" means the owner, guardian, possessor or keeper of the dog.

16 SECTION 2. Chapter 4-13 of the General Laws entitled "Dogs" is hereby amended by  
17 adding thereto the following section:

18 **4-13-13.1. Sheltering, tethering and nourishment of dogs. -- (a) It shall be a violation**  
19 **of this section for a person having charge to:**

20 (1) Keep any dog outside either tethered, penned, caged, fenced or otherwise confined  
21 without access to an outdoor housing facility when the ambient temperature is beyond the  
22 industry standard for the weather safety scale as set forth in the most recent adopted version of  
23 the Tufts Animal Care and Condition Weather Safety Scale if the dog is showing signs of poor  
24 health due to the weather conditions.

25 (2) Keep any dog on a permanent tether that restricts movement of the tethered dog to an  
26 area less than one hundred thirteen square feet (113 sq. ft.), or less than a six foot (6') radius at  
27 ground level.

28 (3) Tether a dog with a choke-type collar or prong-type collar.

29 (4) Keep any dog tethered for more than ten (10) hours during a twenty-four (24) hour  
30 period or keep any dog confined in a pen, cage or other outdoor housing structure for more than  
31 fourteen (14) hours during any twenty-four (24) hour period.

32 (5) Fail to provide proper food, proper water, or proper veterinary care as defined in  
33 section 4-1-1.

34 (b) The provisions of this section shall not apply: (1) If the tethering or confinement is

1 authorized for medical reasons in writing by a veterinarian licensed in Rhode Island which must  
2 be renewed annually and an outdoor housing facility is provided; or (2) If such tethering or  
3 confinement is authorized in writing by an animal control officer; or (3) To a training facility,  
4 grooming facility, commercial boarding kennel, pet shop licensed in accordance with chapter 4-  
5 19, animal shelter, municipal pound or veterinary facility; or (4) To licensed hunters, field trial  
6 participants or any person raising or training a gun dog or hunting dog, provided that the licensed  
7 hunter or field trial hunt test participant is actively engaged in hunting, training or field trial hunt  
8 testing or is transporting the dog to or from an event; or (5) To livestock farmers who use their  
9 dogs to protect their livestock from predators; or (6) To sled dog owners who are actively training  
10 their dogs to pull sleds in winter conditions.

11 (c) Any person in violation of this section shall be given a warning for a first violation.  
12 Second and subsequent violations of this subsection can be considered a violation of section 4-1-  
13 2.

14 (d) The Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RISPCA) in  
15 conjunction with animal control officers are hereby authorized to enforce the aforementioned as  
16 provided in this title. Furthermore, the (RISPCA) in conjunction with animal control officers are  
17 hereby authorized and empowered to examine the dog and to enter upon those grounds or  
18 premises for enforcement of the provisions of this section.

19 SECTION 3. Section 4-1-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 4-1 entitled "Cruelty to  
20 Animals" is hereby amended to read as follows:

21 **4-1-1. Definitions -- Responsibility for agents and employees.** -- (a) In this chapter and  
22 in sections 4-4-9, 4-4-10, and 23-19-8:

23 (1) "Animal" and "animals" means every living creature except a human being;

24 (2) "Licensed graduate veterinarian" or "veterinarian" means a person licensed to engage  
25 in the practice of veterinary medicine, surgery, and dentistry in this state who is a graduate of an  
26 accredited veterinary medical, surgical, and dental school or college of a standard recognized by  
27 the Rhode Island veterinary medical association; and

28 (3) "Owner", "person", and "whoever" means corporations as well as individuals.

29 (4) "Guardian" ~~shall mean~~ means a person(s) having the same rights and responsibilities  
30 of an owner, and both terms shall be used interchangeably. A guardian shall also mean a person  
31 who possesses, has title to or an interest in, harbors or has control, custody or possession of an  
32 animal and who is responsible for an animal's safety and well-being.

33 (5) "Proper food" means access to a sufficient quality and quantity of wholesome  
34 foodstuff suitable for that species that will allow for normal growth and maintenance of the

1 animal's body weight and body condition. Wholesome foodstuff is food intended for that species  
2 of animal or food that is accepted for that species of animal under acceptable animal husbandry  
3 practices. The interval between feeding shall not be more than twenty-four (24) hours.

4 (6) "Proper water" means access to clean, fresh, drinkable potable water sufficient to  
5 maintain the health of the animal not to exceed twelve (12) hours at any interval.

6 (7) "Proper veterinary care" means providing each animal that is suffering from an  
7 illness, injury or medical condition with veterinary care sufficient to prevent unnecessary or  
8 unjustified physical pain or suffering by the animal; provided, that nothing herein shall be  
9 construed to prevent an owner from treating an animal using acceptable animal husbandry  
10 practices.

11 (8) "Shelter for a dog" means a structure, doghouse of the appropriate size for the breed  
12 and size of the dog or other adequate protection from inclement weather, as required to maintain  
13 the dog in a state of good health, and prevent unnecessary or unjustified suffering of the dog.

14 (b) An owner who allows an animal to become emaciated due to a malabsorption  
15 problem, disease, parasitic infestation or any illness or chronic illness when the animal is not  
16 under the direct and continued care of a veterinarian for those problems shall be as guilty as an  
17 owner who does not provide proper food.

18 ~~(b)~~ (c) The knowledge and acts of agents of and persons employed by corporations in  
19 regard to animals transported, owned or employed by or in the custody of that corporation are  
20 held to be the acts and knowledge of that corporation.

21 SECTION 4. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
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1           This act would provide guidelines and penalties for any person that keeps a dog outside  
2 tethered, penned, caged, fenced or otherwise confined without adequate shelter from the elements  
3 and would add definitions of “proper food,” “proper water” and “proper veterinary care” to the  
4 chapter on cruelty to animals.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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