

Date of Hearing: April 24, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 2012 (Lee) – As Introduced January 31, 2024

Policy Committee: Business and Professions

Vote: 18 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), if CDPH deems it necessary, to collect from each local government, annually or quarterly, the following numbers: (1) dogs and cats licensed; (2) dogs and cats received; (3) rabies vaccines administered; (4) dogs and cats discharged, and whether the animals were reclaimed by owner, adopted, or euthanized, among other dispositions; (5) animal bites; (6) animals quarantined due to rabies; and (7) any other data CDPH deems necessary. The bill also authorizes CDPH to contract out the requirements of this bill to a California-accredited veterinary school.

FISCAL EFFECT:

CDPH estimates ongoing annual costs of approximately \$200,000 to \$250,000 to establish a contract with a veterinary school, starting in fiscal year 2024-25 (General Fund). The contract will include a position to collect the specified data from local government animal shelters and collate, retain, summarize, and publish those data.

The County Health Executives Association of California anticipates negligible costs to local governments because most of the data required by this bill have been, and continue to be, collected by animal shelters.

According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, the General Fund faces a structural deficit in the tens of billions of dollars over the next several fiscal years.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by Social Compassion in Legislation. According to the author:

The official state pet is the "Shelter Pet." This bill will help provide important data about shelter animals so that resources are better optimized to find more pets their forever homes.

State, local jurisdictions, and nonprofits invest hundreds of millions of dollars in our shelter system to save animals' lives. Yet the data these entities rely on to direct these resources is no longer available.

This transparency will ensure that the state and other entities are able to direct funding efficiently to shelters with the greatest need, while also giving policymakers a more complete picture of the pet overpopulation problem to make informed policy decisions.

- 2) **Background.** CDPH collected rabies data from shelters until 2016. CDPH explained its reasons for ceasing rabies data collection as follows:

[T]he epidemiology of rabies has transformed from a disease of chiefly domestic dogs to exclusively wildlife reservoirs (bats, skunks)... the role of domestic animals in rabies transmission risk, and the informative value of animal shelter data toward rabies control, has diminished significantly.

3) **Related Legislation**

- a) AB 332 (Lee) is substantially similar to this bill, and requires CDPH to collect and report specified data as part of their rabies control program. AB 332 was held in Senate Appropriations Committee.
- b) AB 2425 (Essayli) requires an animal shelter to provide the public notice of the adoption availability of an animal, and requires the California Department of Food and Agriculture to conduct a study on overcrowding of state animal shelters, among other topics. AB 2425 also includes provisions pertaining to dog breeders. AB 2425 is pending in Assembly Business and Professions Committee.
- c) AB 595 (Essayli), of the current legislative session, requires an animal shelter to provide, at least 72 hours before euthanizing any animal, public notice with information that includes the scheduled euthanasia date, and CDFA to conduct a study on animal shelter overcrowding and the feasibility of a statewide database for animals scheduled to be euthanized. AB 595 was held in this committee.
- d) SB 1358 (Nguyen) is substantially similar to this bill and requires CDPH to collect and report specified data from public animal shelters as part of its annual rabies control activities reporting. SB 1358 is pending in Senate Health Committee.
- e) SB 1459 (Nguyen) requires, among other things, a public animal control agency or shelter in a county with a population greater than 400,000 to publish and update specified data on its internet website, and exempts a veterinarian or registered veterinary technician from prosecution if they willfully release a cat as part of a trap, neuter, and release activity. SB 1459 is pending in Senate Business, Professions, and Economic Development Committee.