
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Senator Dr. Aisha Wahab, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

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| Bill No: | AB 1382 | Hearing Date: | June 1, 2026 |
| Author: | Castillo | | |
| Version: | May 13, 2026 | | |
| Urgency: | No | Fiscal: | No |
| Consultant: | Elissa Silva | | |

Subject: Ethics Over Aesthetics Act

SUMMARY: Prohibits selling, importing for profit, or offering for sale in California a transgenic pet animal, as defined, subject to certain exceptions.

NOTE: *This bill is double-referred to Committee on Judiciary, second.*

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Lockyer-Polanco-Farr Pet Protection Act to regulate the retail sale of dogs and cats, as specified. (Health and Safety Code (HSC) § 122125 et seq.)
- 2) Prohibits a pet dealer from possessing a dog that is less than eight weeks old. (HSC § 122155(b))
- 3) Establishes certain requirements, restitution processes, and consumer rights related to the purchase by a pet dealer of a dog that subsequently falls ill within specified timeframes. (HSC §§ 122160-122190)
- 4) Prohibits an online pet retailer, as defined, from offering, brokering, making a referral for, or otherwise facilitating a loan or other financing option for the adoption or sale of a dog, cat, or rabbit. (HSC § 122191(b))
- 5) Prohibits pet dealers from selling a dog unless it has been examined by a California-licensed veterinarian and requires that the dealer quarantine any sick or diseased animal separate from the healthy animals until a veterinarian determines the dog is free from infection. (HSC § 122210)
- 6) Requires every retail pet dealer to conspicuously post a notice indicating the state where the dog was bred and brokered on the cage of each dog offered for sale. (HSC § 122215)
- 7) Requires any person, pet dealer, or business selling a dog, cat, or rabbit to a purchaser located in California to provide a written notice that contains information including, but not limited to, the origin and known health records of the animal, as specified. (HSC § 122226)
- 8) Requires every pet dealer receiving dogs or cats from a common carrier to transport, or have dogs and cats transported from the carrier's premises within four

hours after receipt of telephone notification by the carrier of the completion of shipment and arrival of the animal at the carrier's point of destination. (HSC § 122130)

- 9) Establishes the Polanco-Lockyer Pet Breeder Warranty Act, which regulates the sale of dogs by dog breeders. (HSC) §§ 122045 et seq.)
- 10) Requires every dog breeder to deliver to each purchaser of a dog a specified written disclosure and record of veterinary treatment. (HSC § 122050)
- 11) Prohibits a dog breeder from knowingly selling a dog that is diseased, ill or has a condition, which requires hospitalization or nonelective surgical procedures. (HSC § 122060)
- 12) Makes a contract that includes or requires a nonrefundable deposit for the transfer of ownership of a dog, cat, or rabbit to a purchaser that is offered, negotiated, brokered, or otherwise arranged by a person, pet dealer, or business, while the purchaser is located in California void as against public policy. (HSC § 122227)
- 13) Prohibits a pet store operator from selling a live dog, cat, or rabbit in a pet store unless the animal was obtained from a public animal control agency or rescue group. (HSC § 122354.5(a))
- 14) Requires pet store operators to maintain specified minimum standards regarding enclosures. (HSC § 122352)
- 15) Prohibits a public animal control agency or shelter, an animal rescue group displaying animals at a pet store, or an animal rescue group operating a retail establishment from offering dogs, cats, or rabbits for adoption unless the animals are sterilized, and the adoption fees from being more than \$500. (HSC § 122354.5(c))
- 16) Subjects a pet store operator who violates the prohibition on the sale of retail animals, who failed to correct the first notice of a violation, to a civil penalty of \$1,000 for the first violation and up to \$5,000 for subsequent violations, as specified. (HSC § 122354.5(d)(2))
- 17) Prohibits "brokers", as defined, from making available for adoption, selling, or offering for sale a dog under one year of age, a cat, or a rabbit, subject to certain exemptions. (HSC § 122365.1)
- 18) Prohibits the hatchery production and stocking of transgenic species of salmonids. (Fish and Game Code (FGC) § 1210)
- 19) Prohibits the spawning, incubation, or cultivation of any transgenic fish species in the water of the Pacific Ocean that are regulated by California. (FGC § 15007)

California Code of Regulations.

- 1) Defines “transgenic” to mean an animal whose genome has been deliberately altered, modified, or engineered, through means not possible under natural conditions, by insertion of a foreign gene or genes using genetic engineering methods. (Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR) § 1.92(a))
- 2) States that an animal is transgenic if animal is transgenic if its chromosomes contain artificially transferred genetic material from any other organism or a laboratory construct, regardless of whether the original source's genetic material was altered, modified or engineered prior to insertion, or whether the originally transferred genetic material was inherited through normal reproduction. (14, CCR § 1.92(1))
- 3) States that a transgenic aquatic animal is not detrimental, and therefore not subject to regulation, as specified, if it is a live tropical marine or freshwater animal that will not be utilized for research purposes, human consumption, or bait purposes and will be maintained in a closed system and not placed in waters of the state. (14, CCR § 1.92(b)(1))

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the “Ethics Over Aesthetics Act” (Act).
- 2) Prohibits a person from importing for profit, selling, or offering for sale, in this state a transgenic pet animal that possesses a cosmetic trait.
- 3) Specifies that the prohibition in 2) above does not apply if any of the following apply:
 - a) The transgenic trait is for the sole purpose of benefiting the health of the transgenic pet animal resistant to a disease or condition.
 - b) The transgenic trait is for the sole purpose of enhancing the transgenic pet animal's interaction with humans, including, but not limited to, promoting hypoallergenic traits, and does not alter the natural functions of the transgenic pet animal.
 - c) The transgenic pet animal is of a fish species that satisfies the requirements of 14, CCR § 1.92(b)(1)).
- 4) Makes each transgenic pet animal imported for profit, sold, or offered for sale in this state in violation of the provisions of this bill to be considered a separate violation and punishable by a civil penalty of not less than \$5,000.
- 5) States that an action to enforce this bill may be brought by the district attorney of the county in which the violation occurred or by the city attorney of the city in which the violation occurred.
- 6) Requires a civil penalty to be paid to the city or county, as applicable, of the attorney that brings the action.
- 7) Defines the following for purposes of the Act:

- a) “Cosmetic transgenic trait” to mean a transgenic trait that alters, modifies, or engineers a transgenic pet animal’s appearance or natural functions, which may include, but not be limited to, novel fur, skin, feather, or scale coloring, the removal of claws or vocal cords, or the addition or subtraction of appendages.
- b) “Pet animal” to mean a dog, cat, rabbit, guinea pig, hamster, mouse, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish, or other species of animal kept for the purposes of being a household pet.
- c) “Transgenic pet animal” to mean a pet animal that possesses a transgenic trait and includes the progeny of a transgenic pet animal.
- d) “Transgenic trait” means a trait that has been deliberately altered, modified, or engineered through means not possible under natural conditions, by insertion of a foreign gene using genetic engineering methods, including but not limited to, the introduction of chromosomes containing artificially transferred genetic material from any other organism or laboratory construct regardless of whether the original source’s genetic material was altered, modified, or engineered before insertion, or whether the originally transferred genetic material was inherited through normal reproduction.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This bill is keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS:

1. **Purpose.** Social Compassion in Legislation is the sponsor of this bill. According to the Author, “AB 1382 is a necessary step to ensure California remains a leader in responsible science and animal welfare by prohibiting the sale of genetically modified pets created solely for cosmetic appeal. While genomic technology has important medical and public health applications, this bill draws a clear and reasonable line to prevent its use for novelty purposes that place animals at risk. Allowing the commercialization of “designer” pets prioritizes aesthetics over animal well-being and risks exacerbating California’s already severe pet overpopulation and shelter crisis. AB 1382 expressly preserves legitimate scientific research and health-based genetic advancements, ensuring innovation can continue to thrive. This bill reflects California’s values by promoting ethical stewardship, protecting biodiversity, and preventing unnecessary harm to animals.”

2. **Background.**

Retail Pet Sales and Regulation in California. Recent legislation has aimed to enhance the sale requirements of pets in California in an effort to help address pet overpopulation, discourage a supply of puppy mill and kitten factory animals, ensure humane conditions and treatment for animals that are purchased outside of California, protect consumers from unscrupulous pet breeders and unethical sales tactics, and safeguard California residents from sick or otherwise unhealthy pet animals being sold into this state.

Generally, California regulates the sale of animals through the Polanco-Lockyer Pet Breeder Warranty Act (Warranty Act) and the Lockyer-Polanco-Farr Pet Protection Act (Protection Act). The Warranty Act is applicable to California breeders, and the Protection Act applies to retail sales in stores. California's breeder and pet retail sales laws are intended to ensure a consumer has recourse should any problems arise with respect to the health of the animal after the animal is purchased. The Protection Act also includes specific requirements to ensure consumers have information about the pet's origins and the health and safety of the animals prior to purchase and while in the care of the pet retailer.

California does not license dog breeders in this state. Instead, dog breeders are authorized to operate if they meet the definition of breeder and comply with the requirements specified in the Warranty Act. Under the provisions of the Warranty Act, consumers may receive a refund, or reimbursement should they purchase a sick dog, or a dog found to have a hereditary or congenital condition requiring surgery or hospitalization. Pursuant to provisions within the Warranty Act, dog breeders must provide specific written disclosures, including the breeder's name, address, information on the dog, and signed statements that the dog has no known diseases or illnesses, as well as a notice of the purchaser's rights to obtain a refund or reimbursement.

The provisions of the Warranty Act are not applicable to defined shelters or rescue groups or to pet dealers. Pet dealers are regulated and defined under the Protection Act, which ensures that when selling a pet to a consumer, pet dealers must provide purchasers with written information about the animal's health, including any known illnesses or conditions. Additionally, under the Protection Act, before any dog or cat is sold, the dog or cat must be examined by a licensed veterinarian to ensure it is free from contagious diseases and fit for sale. The Protection Act also outlines consumer remedies in the event a purchased animal is found to be ill or affected by a congenital or hereditary condition within 15 days of sale, in which case the consumer may be entitled to a refund, exchange, or reimbursement for veterinary costs. The law also imposes recordkeeping requirements, obligating dealers to retain documentation regarding the source of animals, veterinary treatments, and sales transactions for a specified period. Enforcement of the Protection Act is delegated to local animal control agencies and humane officers, who are authorized to conduct inspections and enforce compliance, and violations of the law may result in civil penalties and administrative actions.

The Pet Store Animal Care Act (Pet Store Act) establishes the minimum care and cleanliness standards for animals housed and sold in retail pet stores in California. The Pet Store Act defines a "pet store" as a retail establishment open to the public that sells or offers for sale animals normally kept as household pets, and outlines detailed requirements for housing, sanitation, feeding, veterinary care, socialization, and enrichment for animals in these stores. Stores must maintain written programs of veterinary care developed in consultation with a licensed veterinarian and specify that an animal showing signs of illness or distress must receive prompt attention. This law also prohibits the sale of animals younger than eight weeks and requires records of animal origin and health status to be kept for specified periods.

Current law prohibits a pet store operator in California from selling a live dog, cat, or rabbit in California unless that animal originates from a public animal control agency or shelter, or animal rescue. With the enactment of AB 485 (O'Donnell, Chapter 740, Statutes of 2017), California became one of the first states in the nation to ban the sale of certain live animals in pet stores and instead promote the rehoming of animals through shelter and rescue organization partnerships with pet supply retailers.

Last year, the Governor signed a trio of bills—AB 506 (Bennett, Chapter 477, Statutes of 2025), AB 519 (Berman, Chapter 478, Statutes of 2025) and SB 312 (Umberg, Chapter 480, Statutes of 2025)—to enhance transparency and accountability related to commercial pet dog, cat, and rabbit sales and transactions in California. Specifically, AB 506 established clear contract laws and disclosure requirements that pet sellers must abide by when selling one of these animals, and a private right of action for any violation of these requirements. AB 519 banned for-profit pet “brokers” in California, subject to certain exceptions, which prohibits the practice of re-selling a dog, cat, or rabbit that is bred by another individual. Finally, SB 312 established clear guidelines and requirements related to certificates of veterinary inspection (CVIs) for commercial dog importation into California and required these CVIs be submitted to the Department of Food and Agriculture. This bill seeks to build upon recent animal welfare laws by prohibiting the sale of pet animals (including a dog, cat, rabbit, guinea pig, hamster, mouse, reptile, amphibian, bird, fish, or any other species of animal that is kept for purposes of being a pet) that is a transgenic animal with a cosmetic transgenic trait.

Transgenic Animals. Transgenic animals are those that have been subject to genetic modification, which allows for new traits or capabilities which are not natural to the animal. Transgenic animals may be differentiated from genetically modified animals in that genetically modified animals are modifications of existing genetics within the animal, while transgenic animals have insertions of new genetics into the animal's makeup. Transgenic animals are not new, however transgenic animals have primarily been utilized in the science and research space. As reported, the first transgenic animals were mice developed in 1794. Since that time, transgenic mice have been used widely in biomedical research.

Genetically modified animals—and genetically modified organisms generally—are regulated federally by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). These genetically altered animals are referred by the FDA as “Intentional Genomic Alterations” (IGAs). According to information provided on the FDA's website, the FDA regulates IGAs in animals through a risk-based approach, from category 1 through 3. Risk is measured based on several factors, such as the risk to the animal or animal species, the potential to harm consumers or food supplies, and possible environmental impacts.

While transgenic animals are primarily used in the fields of science and medicine, there are examples in past decades of transgenic animals being developed for food consumption and purposes of pet sales and companionship. For example, a transgenic salmon was developed in 1989, which was originally intended as a food product. In 2003, after years of research stemming from breakthroughs in adding fluorescent jellyfish proteins into certain fish species for purposes of studying

migration patterns, Yorktown Technologies began to market and sell fluorescent fish in the United States. GloFish® are a patented brand of transgenic aquarium fish that exhibit fluorescent colors under certain lights and are sold across the U.S. as pet fish.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) regulate the importation, possession, and transport of a wide variety of mammal and aquatic species, including a specific list of “Restricted Species” that are prohibited from being sold or possessed in the state unless expressly permitted by the Commission. Under these restrictions, “transgenic aquatic animals” are included, and are specified to include “freshwater and marine fishes, invertebrates, amphibians, and reptiles.”

In 2014, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed AB 504 (Chesbro, Chapter 444, Statutes of 2014), which among other provisions, prohibited the hatchery production, stocking, incubation, or cultivation of any transgenic salmonid in California, but provided a pathway for private entities to apply for a transgenic salmonid research permit, provided it is not employed for commercial production, and there is no chance of those salmon from entering the wild. Current regulations (14, CCR § 1.92) promulgated by the Department of Fish and Game, exempt from regulation of transgenic aquatic animals in California, if specified criteria are met including, it is a live tropical marine or freshwater animal not utilized for research purposes, human consumption or bait, maintained in a closed-system, and the presence of the transgenic aquatic animal poses no reasonable risk to native fish, wildlife, or pets. Recent amendments to this bill allow for the continued sale of a transgenic pet animal that is a fish that meets the requirements pursuant to current regulations (14, CCR § 1.92).

Along with fish for pet use and salmon for human consumption, there are other examples of transgenic animal development through research purpose, including a beagle puppy created in 2009 that glowed under specified light conditions. As provided by the Author of this bill, “Despite the pet overpopulation crisis, some companies are exploring modifying the genes of various animals to create novel traits such as glow-in-the-dark fur. If these animals are created, they will only add to our pet overpopulation crisis when the public impulse buys these animals, which are surely to go “viral,” before they end up filling up our animal shelters and overburdening our animal rescue nonprofits. In addition to the burden these animals would place on the state and nonprofits, it is our contention that modifying the genes of animals simply for the purposes of cosmetics and novelty is unethical. There is no need for these animals to be exploited simply for the “creators” of these animals to make a profit, while the animals and California’s taxpayers foot the bill for the repercussions of the pet overpopulation problem they will exacerbate.”

This bill prohibits the importation or sale of a transgenic pet animal that possesses a cosmetic transgenic trait. For example, breeding a dog with a specific hair color. This bill provides a definition of a cosmetic genetic traits to include those that alters, modifies, or engineers a transgenic pet animal’s appearance or natural functions, which may include, but not be limited to, novel fur, skin, feather, or scale coloring, the removal of claws or vocal cords, or the addition or subtraction of appendage”. The bill clarifies that transgenic traits that are for the sole purpose of benefiting the

health of the animal or for enhancing the pet animal's interaction with humans (such as promoting hypoallergenic traits) are exempt from the prohibitions of this bill. This bill is narrow in that it aims to address transgenic traits that might make fur a special color (like a blue bunny) or some other cosmetic enhancement that does not support or benefit the animal or human companion.

3. **Related Legislation.** AB 506 (Bennett, Chapter 477, Statutes of 2025) specifies information that must be included in a contract between a buyer and pet seller, prohibits such contracts from requiring a nonrefundable deposit, and provides consumer remedies and rights of action for contracts.

AB 519 (Berman, Chapter 478, Statutes of 2025) prohibits "brokers", as defined, from selling, offering for sale, or making available for adoption any dog, cat, or rabbit, subject to certain exemptions.

SB 312 (Umberg, Chapter 480, Statutes of 2025) expands requirements related to obtaining and submitting a health certificate to the Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) when selling or importing dogs into California, and requires the CDFA to retain, and make available upon request, information related to the health certificates.

AB 2380 (Maienschein, Chapter 548, Statutes of 2022) prohibits an online pet retailer, as defined, from offering a loan or other financing for the adoption or sale of a dog, cat, or rabbit.

AB 2152 (Gloria & O'Donnell, Chapter 96, Statutes of 2020) prohibits a pet store from selling dogs, cats, or rabbits, but allows a pet store to provide space to display animals for adoption if the animals are displayed by either a shelter or animal rescue group, as defined, and establishes a fee limit, inclusive of the adoption fee, for animals adopted at a pet store.

AB 485 (O'Donnell, Chapter 740, Statutes of 2017) prohibits, beginning January 1, 2019, a pet store operator from selling a live cat, dog, or rabbit in a pet store unless they are offered through a public animal control agency or shelter, specified nonprofit, or animal rescue or adoption organization, as defined.

AB 1491 (Caballero, Chapter 761, Statutes of 2017) declares as void against public policy a contract for the purchase of a dog or cat which is made contingent on making payments over a period of time, or other types of lease-to-own agreements that do not immediately transfer ownership of the animal to the purchaser.

4. **Arguments in Support.** Humane World for Animals writes in support and notes, "There is no reason to sell pets that have been subject to intentional genetic modification for cosmetic purposes. These alterations may have unknown health implications for the animals and will exacerbate an already overwhelming pet overpopulation crisis."

A large coalition of supporters writes in support and notes, "As a state with a history of working to protect animal welfare and ensuring scientific development occurs responsibly, it is vital for California to proactively take legislative action to prevent

the proliferation of designer pets at the expense of animals, as well as prevent our state's already burdened animal shelters from taking on more unwanted animals.”

SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION:

Support:

Social Compassion in Legislation (sponsor)
Angel's Furry Friends Rescue
Animal Legal Defense Fund
Animal Rescue Mission
Animal Rescuers for Change
Animal Wellness Action
Berkeley Animal Rights Center
Better Together Forever
Born Again Animal Rescue and Adoption
Compassionate Bay
Concerned Citizens Animal Rescue
Doggie Business Dog Training
Earthheart
Feline Lucky Adventures
Fine Tuning Dog Training
Giantmecha Syndicate
Greater Los Angeles Animal Spay Neuter Collaborative
Hugs and Kisses Animal Fund
Humane World for Animals
Jaimie Brianna's Legacy Fund
Latino Alliance for Animal Care Foundation
Leaders for Ethics, Animals, and the Planet (LEAP)
Long Beach Spay and Neuter Foundation
Los Angeles Democrats for the Protection of Animals
Los Angeles Rabbit Foundation
Michelson Center for Public Policy
NY 4 Whales
Pibbles N Kibbles Animal Rescue
Plant-based Advocates
Project Minnie
Rabbit Savior
Rabbit.org Foundation
Real Good Rescue
San Diego Companion Rabbit Society
Seeds 4 Change Now Animal Rescue
Seniors Citizens for Humane Education and Legislation
Start Rescue
Students Against Animal Cruelty Club - Hueneme High School
The Canine Condition
Pet Loss Support Group
The Spayce Project
Underdog Heroes, INC.

Women United for Animal Welfare
World Animal Protection
Numerous individuals

Opposition:

None received as of May 26, 2026

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