
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 631 (Lee) - Animals: animal shelters: transparency

Version: July 9, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 18, 2025

Policy Vote: B., P. & E.D. 11 - 0

Mandate: Yes

Consultant: Janelle Miyashiro

Bill Summary: AB 631 requires an animal shelter to collect, record, and post data on the number of animals taken in, the source of intake, and animal outcomes. AB 631 also encourages private rescue groups to collect and post similar data as required by the shelters.

Fiscal Impact: Unknown potentially reimbursable mandate costs for public animal shelters to collect and post data on animals taken in, and update this data on a quarterly basis (General Fund). Actual costs to the shelters will depend on, among other things, the extent they are already collecting and tracking this information, and if they would need any IT resources to make this information publicly available. To the extent the Commission on State Mandates determines that any of the provisions of this bill create a new program or impose a higher level of service on local agencies, local agencies could claim reimbursement of those costs.

Background: There are approximately 200 private and public shelters in California, which take in stray, lost, abandoned or surrendered animals. Shelters are primarily operated by local governments, are subject to local funding, and managed by county or city, or city and county employees. Often times, these shelters are additionally staffed with a shelter volunteer workforce and contract with licensed veterinarians or registered veterinary technicians to provide necessary healthcare services to the animals in shelter care. A licensed veterinarian is required to provide all medical services at shelters, with an exception that trained persons can administer: 1) specific vaccinations; 2) nonprescription medications for the control or eradication of internal or external parasites, such as fleas, ticks, or worms; 3) certain medications when the shelter has received a written treatment plan from a licensed veterinarian for a specific animal; and 4) provide euthanasia, which may only be performed using sodium pentobarbital after training.

Shelters are currently required to keep accurate records on each animal taken in, medically treated or impounded. Shelters must record the date the animal is taken up, treated, impounded or euthanized and the record must include the circumstances of each along with a record of the personnel who provided the care and a description of any medical treatment provided. Shelters must also record the final disposition of the animal and the name of whoever provided euthanasia. Because there is not a mandated central data-reporting agency for animal shelters, most data are estimates.

Proposed Law:

- Requires an animal shelter to collect and record all of the following information:
 - The number of animals taken in with separate categories for dogs, cats, and other animals.
 - The source of intake separated by category, including, but not limited to, stray animals, surrendered by owner, or transferred from another animal shelter.
 - The outcomes for all animals separated by category, including, but not limited to, returned to owner, adopted, transferred to another organization, euthanized, died in care, or dead upon arrival.
- Requires the above information to be updated at least once per quarter and be handled as follows:
 - If an animal shelter has an internet website, the animal shelter shall post the information on its internet website and the information shall remain publicly accessible on the internet website for at least five years.
 - If an animal shelter does not have an internet website, the animal shelter shall make the information publicly available, upon request, for at least five years.
- Encourages rescue groups to comply with the above data collection and recording requirements.
- Encourages animal shelters and rescue groups with local contracts for animal care to make the above information available in a downloadable spreadsheet format that may include, but is not limited to, a comma-separated values file or a tab-separated values file and that is compatible with a spreadsheet software application that is widely used at the time of the posting.
- Defines “animal shelter” to mean a public or private animal control agency or shelter, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals shelter, or humane society shelter.
- Defines “rescue group” to mean a for-profit or not-for-profit entity with at least one of its purposes being the sale or placement of animals that have been removed from a public or private animal control agency or shelter, society for the prevention of cruelty to animals shelter, or humane society shelter, or that have been previously owned by a person other than the original breeder of that animal.
- States legislative findings and declarations.

Related Legislation: SB 1459 (Nguyen, 2024) was similar to this bill and would have required a public animal shelter to update, at least once per month, any data the animal shelter makes available on its website, and required the posted data to include the number of animals taken in during the prior month and the outcomes for animals over the prior month. SB 1459 was held on the Suspense File in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

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