



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 716

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 6231

House of Representatives, April 16, 2025

The Committee on Environment reported through REP. PARKER of the 101st Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

**AN ACT RESTRICTING THE EUTHANIZATION OF FERAL CATS,
PROHIBITING CERTAIN EMPLOYMENT AS AN ANIMAL CONTROL
OFFICER AND STUDYING THE INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE
ORGANIZATIONS AT ANIMAL CONTROL FACILITIES.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 22-339d of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

3 (a) A municipality may adopt an ordinance requiring the registration,
4 within one year of the adoption of such ordinance, of keepers of feral
5 cats in residential or commercial areas. Such ordinance shall require that
6 any such keeper shall register with the animal control officer for such
7 municipality who shall provide information to the registrant regarding
8 the proper care and management of feral cats. For purposes of this
9 section, "feral cat" means a free-roaming domestic cat which is not
10 owned and "keeper" means any person or organization, harboring,
11 regularly feeding or having in his or its possession any feral cat. Refusal
12 to permit any animal control officer to impound a feral cat shall be

13 deemed evidence of keeping. Such ordinance shall require that such
14 keepers shall provide for the vaccination of such cats against rabies and
15 the sterilization of such cats. Such keeper shall be considered an eligible
16 owner for purposes of the animal population control program
17 established under sections 22-380e to 22-380m, inclusive, provided such
18 cats are adopted from a municipal pound.

19 (b) A municipality may adopt an ordinance providing that no person
20 owning or keeping any cat shall permit such animal to (1) substantially
21 damage property other than the property of the owner or keeper, or (2)
22 cause an unsanitary [] or dangerous [or unreasonably offensive]
23 condition. Violation of such provision shall be an infraction.

24 (c) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter: (1) Each
25 animal control officer shall consult an animal rescue or feral cat
26 organization when undertaking efforts to control the feral cat
27 population in any such municipality for the purpose of the possible
28 placement of any such feral cat in the care of such organization, and (2)
29 no municipality, animal control officer or regional animal control officer
30 shall euthanize a feral cat for any purpose other than that such animal
31 presents a public health danger, such as a communicable disease,
32 including, but not limited to, rabies, or such cat is injured to an extent
33 that euthanasia is determined to be the only humane course of action by
34 a veterinarian licensed in this state.

35 Sec. 2. (NEW) (Effective October 1, 2025) No person shall serve, or
36 continue to serve, as an animal control officer or regional animal control
37 officer, pursuant to section 22-331 or 22-331a of the general statutes, as
38 applicable, if such person is convicted of animal abuse or neglect
39 pursuant to section 53-247 of the general statutes, enters a plea of nolo
40 contendere on such a charge or enters into a plea bargain concerning
41 such a charge.

42 Sec. 3. (Effective from passage) Not later than July 1, 2025, the
43 Commissioner of Agriculture shall convene a working group within the
44 Department of Agriculture to develop recommendations for legislation
45 to: (1) Create guidelines and determine best practices for the provision

46 of mutual aid to animal control and dog pound facilities by animal
 47 rescue organizations and members of the public, (2) address ways to
 48 shorten the length of time seized animals are kept in custody at such
 49 facilities, (3) improve current training standards for animal control
 50 officers through enhanced continuing education requirements, and (4)
 51 establish protocols for the use of volunteers in animal control facilities.
 52 Such working group shall consist of: (A) The Commissioner of
 53 Agriculture, or the commissioner's designee, (B) the Chief State's
 54 Attorney, or such attorney's designee, (C) three representatives of an
 55 organization that represents animal control officers who shall be
 56 appointed by the commissioner and, respectively, represent urban,
 57 suburban and rural municipalities, (D) a representative of a municipal
 58 police department, appointed by the commissioner, and (E) a
 59 representative from an animal rights organization, appointed by the
 60 commissioner. Such working group shall hold not less than two public
 61 forums in undertaking the responsibilities described in this section. The
 62 commissioner, on or before February 1, 2026, shall submit the
 63 recommendations of such working group to the joint standing
 64 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
 65 relating to the environment, in accordance with section 11-4a of the
 66 general statutes.

67 Sec. 4. Section 22-332d of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective*
 68 *from passage*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	22-339d
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	Repealer section

ENV Joint Favorable Subst.

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Potential Revenue Loss	Minimal	Minimal

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Various Municipalities	Potential Savings	Minimal	Minimal

Explanation

The bill makes changes regarding laws around feral cats and animal control officers which results in the fiscal impacts described below.

Section 1 prevents an animal control officer from euthanizing feral cats unless they meet certain requirements. This may result in a potential savings to municipalities to the extent fewer cats are euthanized.¹

The section instead requires animal control officers to consult with an animal rescue or feral cost organization which does not result in a fiscal impact.

Section 2 prevents anyone from serving as an animal control officer if they have been convicted of animal abuse which does not result in a fiscal impact.

¹ Any savings is expected to be minimal as euthanasia typically costs approximately \$100 per cat.

Section 4 requires the Department of Agriculture to convene a working group to develop legislative recommendations on various practices regarding animal rescue and control which does not result in a fiscal impact.

Section 4 repeals a law regarding impounding and disposing of certain cats. This may result in a potential savings to municipalities as they no longer will be required to (1) impound certain cats, (2) notify the cat's owner or publish a notice in a local newspaper, (3) have a veterinarian spay or neuter the cat, and (4) have the cat killed if it remains unclaimed.

The section also repeals an infraction which results in a potential loss in revenue to the General Fund.²

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation and the number of feral cats.

² From FY 20 – FY 24, 4 charges were recorded and \$150 in associated revenue collected under CGS § 22-332d.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6231*****AN ACT RESTRICTING THE EUTHANIZATION OF FERAL CATS, PROHIBITING CERTAIN EMPLOYMENT AS AN ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER AND STUDYING THE INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS AT ANIMAL CONTROL FACILITIES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes a number of unrelated changes regarding animal control officers (ACOs), cats, and animal rescue organizations.

First, the bill prohibits a person from being a municipal or regional ACO if he or she is convicted of animal abuse or neglect or enters a no contest plea or plea bargain on such a charge (§ 2). Under existing law, if convicted, a person cannot, for five years (and in addition to any other sentence imposed), (1) harbor, own, possess, reside with, adopt, or serve as a foster placement for any animal or (2) be employed by, or volunteer for, any entity in any position that involves care for, or regular contact with, any animal (CGS § 53-247(f)).

The bill prohibits a municipality or its ACO from euthanizing a feral cat for any reason except for when the cat (1) poses a public health danger or (2) is so injured that a Connecticut-licensed veterinarian decides euthanasia is the only humane action. It requires ACOs to consult an animal rescue organization when trying to control the feral cat population in a municipality, and it revises the allowed subject of municipal ordinances on cat ownership generally (§ 1). It also repeals the law that permits ACOs to impound and dispose of certain cats (§ 4).

Lastly, the bill requires the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) commissioner to convene a working group to develop legislative recommendations for various things, including shortening the length of time seized animals are kept in custody at the animal control facilities

and protocols for using volunteers in the facilities. The commissioner must report recommendations to the Environment Committee by February 1, 2026 (§ 3).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage, except that the provision prohibiting someone convicted of animal abuse or neglect from being an ACO is effective October 1, 2025.

§§ 1 & 4 — LOCAL ACTIONS INVOLVING CATS

Euthanizing Feral Cats

The bill prohibits a municipality or a municipal or regional ACO from euthanizing a feral cat for any reason other than the cat (1) poses a public health danger (e.g., has a communicable disease, including rabies) or (2) is so injured that a Connecticut-licensed veterinarian decides euthanasia is the only humane course of action. By law, a “feral cat” is a free-roaming domestic cat that is not owned.

Animal Rescue Organization Consult About Feral Cats

The bill requires an ACO to consult an animal rescue or feral cat organization when trying to control the feral cat population in a municipality. The consult is to possibly place feral cats with the organization.

Municipal Ordinances on Cats Generally

By law, municipalities may adopt ordinances prohibiting anyone from owning or keeping a cat that (1) substantially damages someone else’s property or (2) causes an unsanitary, dangerous, or unreasonably offensive condition. The bill eliminates the “unreasonably offensive condition” element from the permissible ordinances. By law, a violation of such an ordinance is an infraction.

Repealed Section on Impounding and Disposing of Certain Cats

The bill repeals a current law that, among other things:

1. allows an ACO for a municipality that has adopted an ordinance about cats generally to impound cats that are damaging another’s property or causing an unsanitary, dangerous, or unreasonably

offensive condition;

2. requires the ACO to notify the cat's owner or keeper, if known, about its impoundment or publish notice in a local newspaper;
3. makes it an infraction not to collect a cat one owns or keeps after receiving notice that the ACO impounded it;
4. allows the ACO, if the cat is not claimed by its owner within seven days, to have a veterinarian spay or neuter the cat and sell the cat as a pet; and
5. requires the ACO to have the cat mercifully killed if it remains unclaimed.

§ 3 — WORKING GROUP

Charge

The bill requires the DoAg commissioner, by July 1, 2025, to convene a seven-member working group within the department to develop legislative recommendations on the following:

1. guidelines and best practices for animal rescue organizations and the public to provide mutual aid to animal control and dog pound facilities,
2. ways to shorten the length of time seized animals are kept in custody at the facilities,
3. ways to improve ACO training through enhanced continuing education requirements, and
4. protocols for using volunteers in animal control facilities.

Membership

The working group consists of the DoAg commissioner and the chief state's attorney, or their designees, and five members the DoAg commissioner appoints, as follows:

1. three representatives of an organization representing ACOs that

represent, respectively, urban, suburban, and rural municipalities;

2. a municipal police department representative; and
3. an animal rights organization representative.

Public Forums and Report

The bill requires the (1) working group to hold at least two public forums and (2) commissioner to report the group's recommendations to the Environment Committee by February 1, 2026.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 31 Nay 2 (03/28/2025)