
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 7257

AN ACT REQUIRING AN INVESTIGATION OF ANY REPORTED DOG BITE OR ATTACK.

SUMMARY

This bill allows a person to make a complaint about a dog bite or attack to a municipal or regional animal control officer (ACO) of the town where the bite or attack occurred. It requires the ACO to (1) investigate the circumstances of the bite or attack and (2) report them to the Department of Agriculture (DoAg)-appointed chief state ACO.

After an investigation, if a municipal, regional, or DoAg-appointed ACO in the town or region where the alleged dog bite or attack occurred determines that a person has in fact been bitten or attacked by a dog, the bill authorizes the ACO to make an order to restrain or dispose of the dog as needed to protect public health and safety (see below).

Existing law allows a person to kill a biting or attacking dog and has a process similar to the bill's requiring the person to file a complaint to an ACO, an ACO to investigate the complaint, and, after considering public health and safety-related factors, an ACO to issue a final order. Under existing law, but not the bill, final orders may be appealed and noncompliance with the order is a crime (see BACKGROUND).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2025

PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY FACTORS

By law, in the interest of public health and safety, if after investigation, a municipal, regional, or DoAg-appointed ACO in the municipality or region in which an alleged dog bite or attack occurs determines that a person has in fact been bitten or attacked by a dog, the ACO may make any order concerning the restraint or disposal of the biting or attacking dog as is necessary to protect public health and safety.

In determining the type of order to be issued or conditions of restraint to be imposed, the ACO must consider factors including:

1. the owner's or keeper's ability, if any, to control the dog;
2. the severity of the injury the dog inflicted on the person;
3. the viciousness of the bite or attack;
4. any history of the dog's past bites or attacks;
5. whether the bite or attack occurred at a location that is off of the property of the dog's owner or keeper;
6. whether the dog was provoked; and
7. whether the dog was protecting its owner or keeper from physical harm (CGS § 22-358(c)).

BACKGROUND

Related Law

In 2024, the legislature enacted a law (PA 24-108 §§ 28 & 43, codified at CGS § 22-358) with reporting and investigating provisions similar to those in this bill. The 2024 act generally replaced the prior dog bite response law with provisions that (1) establish new procedures for owners, keepers, ACOs, police officers, and injured persons to follow and (2) specify factors an ACO must consider in deciding whether to issue an order to restrain or dispose a biting or attacking dog.

The 2024 law generally (1) allows anyone injured by a biting or attacking dog to kill the animal and (2) requires him or her to file a complaint to the ACO. The ACO must investigate the complaint, and, if the ACO determines that the person was bitten or attacked, the law provides factors the ACO must consider in determining what type of final order to issue or restraint conditions to impose. The act makes noncompliance with a final order or judgment a class D misdemeanor, punishable by a fine up to \$250, up to 30 days in prison, or both.

This law provides for a pre-appeal meeting within a certain amount

of time after the ACO's order and allows for a further appeal to the Superior Court.

It establishes similar provisions for when a person's animal is injured by the dog. It also created exemptions for military, law enforcement, and service animals.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 39 Nay 0 (04/10/2025)