

Congress Passes Amended PETS Act

Both Senate and House of Reps give official approval.

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The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have passed an amended version of the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act, which requires local and state disaster plans to include provisions for household pets and service animals in a major disaster or emergency.

The House of Representatives originally passed the bill in May and the Senate amended it in August by adding language giving the Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA) power to make financial contributions to local and state plans that factor the needs of those with pets and service animals into disaster planning.

The night of Sept. 20, the Senate amendment to the original House bill was approved unanimously in the House.

"Two-thirds of American households own pets and when Katrina hit, many pet owners had to choose between their own safety and the safety of their pets. The PETS Act will help us ensure that during future emergencies we have plans to protect pet owners and their pets," Rep. Chris Shays (R-CT), a co-sponsor of the bill said in a prepared statement.

The bill has been sent to President Bush, and if/when he signs it, it becomes federal law.