

Florida Mandatory Spay/Neuter Bill Set for Hearing

Proposal would require cats and dogs to be sterilized at 4 months of age.

Posted: March 24, 2009, 3 a.m. EDT

A bill being proposed in Florida today would mandate spaying/neutering for cats and dogs 4 months and older. A bill mandating spay/neuter procedures for dogs and cats over 4 months of age in Florida has been scheduled to be heard today at the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Committee's meeting.

The proposal, House Bill 451, describes pet overpopulation as a preventable problem that can be solved "simply by spaying and neutering companion animals." As introduced, the bill requires the owner of every dog or cat in Florida to have each animal sterilized within 30 days of the animal reaching 4 months of age, or within 30 days of the owner taking in the pet.

Criteria for exemption include the following: Dogs with veterinary certification showing that sterilization would endanger the pet's health because of its age, disability or illness A Greyhound used for racing, until retirement Show animals registered with an established breed registration group approved by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Dogs or cats that have earned, or are in the process of earning, a competitive sports title, such as agility or obedience Animals trained, or in training, for use in law enforcement, military or rescue Animals for which an owner holds a valid breeding permit issued in accordance with an ordinance of a county or municipality.

In addition, the bill authorizes a county or municipality to collect a surcharge of up to \$5 on civil penalties, which range from \$100 to \$250.