

New York Legislators Consider Bills to Regulate Dog, Cat Dealers

Proposal seeks to limit the number of dogs or cats a person may possess.

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New York state legislators have introduced two bills, Senate Bill 5392 and Senate Bill 4961, that aim to regulate dog and cat dealers. The Senate Committee on Agriculture was set to hear the two measures on Tuesday, June 2.

As introduced, Senate Bill 5392 seeks to limit cat and dog ownership. Under the proposal, no person or business would be allowed to possess more than 50 intact dogs over the age of 4 months and intact cats over the age of 4 months that are kept for the purpose of breeding and selling of their offspring. The bill would authorize officials to confiscate animals from violators.

Senate Bill 4961 amends the definition of a "pet dealer" to include anyone who sells, offers to sell or negotiates the sale of "animals born or raised on the premises of another or who keeps on his or her premises more than four intact female dogs 6 months of age or older for the purpose of breeding." The definition still includes breeders who sell or offer to sell animals, but eliminates the current exemption for those who sell less than 25 animals per year.

Senate Bill 4961 also sets forth a number of new regulations for such pet dealers. Under the proposed measure, pet dealers would be required to: Designate and provide an isolation area for animals exhibiting symptoms of disease; Designate and employ an attending veterinarian; Establish a program of veterinary care; Develop and maintain an exercise plan approved by the state Department of Agriculture; Possess certain records established by this law prior to the sale of animals; Abstain from purchasing animals from unlicensed dealers who are required to be licensed; Provide a written release allowing the Department of Agriculture to have access to all health and breed registry records.

The proposal also increases the license fee for pet dealers with gross sales of \$50,000 or more to \$300 annually.

Refusal to allow the department to inspect records or facilities would result in the loss of license. If the license applicant or any of his or her immediate family members had a license revoked in the previous five years, the applicant would be ineligible for a license.