

California Legislators to Consider Bill on Limiting Ownership of Intact Dogs and Cats

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California legislators are poised to hear a measure that seeks to limit the number of intact cats and dogs a person may own. The state Assembly recently approved the bill, and the Senate Committee on Public Safety is scheduled to hear the proposal on June 23.

Assembly Bill 241 would prohibit any person from having more than a combined total of 50 unsterilized dogs and cats that are kept for breeding or raised for sale as pets. Those in possession of more than 50 would have to spay or neuter the excess animals or sell, transfer or relinquish the animals within 30 days. If necessary, any euthanasia procedures would have to be performed by a licensed veterinarian or person qualified to perform such procedures pursuant to regulations adopted by the Veterinary Medical Board.

AB 241 authorizes a peace officer, humane officer or animal control officer to take possession of any animal that is kept in violation. Violators would be guilty of a misdemeanor.

A pet industry group called the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) argues that there is no correlation between the size of a breeding facility and the quality of care provided to the animals. According to the organization, the only way to ensure humane care of animals is to establish and enforce reasonable standards under which breeders may keep them.

In an alert issued June 18, PIJAC expressed concern that the bill would "require the euthanasia or relinquishment of dogs and cats that are perfectly healthy and being maintained with the best possible care in the finest facilities." PIJAC also claimed that the bill would increase the incidences of defects in cats and dogs by limiting the diversity in breeding stock.

The group is calling on members of the pet industry and the public to contact state Senators and members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and speak out against the proposed bill.