

Council to Consider Tougher Animal Cruelty Laws

King County, Wash., may designate up to two animal control officers to focus on cruelty cases.

A recent proposition by two King County, Wash., Council members would designate one or two animal-control officers to focus on cruelty cases. Council members Julia Patterson and Larry Phillips also want the county, which includes Seattle, to look into ways to improve coordination between animal control and local police agencies investigating cruelty cases and step up efforts to prevent animal cruelty. A County Council committee was briefed on the proposal May 23 and agreed to send it to the full council for consideration on June 5. During that May 23 meeting, King County Animal Control Manager Walt Washington said designating one or two animal control officers to investigate only cruelty cases might not be practical, since the majority of the hundreds of animal cruelty or neglect calls received each year prove unfounded. In 2005, there were 1,002 calls for animal cruelty or neglect and 899 were unfounded. In 2004, four cases of animal cruelty were filed by prosecutors, and in 2005, only two were filed, Washington said. Eunice Grubb, founder of the Feral Cat Coalition of King County-Seattle, testified before the Council committee that she doesn't favor designating cruelty investigators, but would like to see the money that would go toward that spent on educating the public about animal care and behavior. Posted: May 30, 2006, 5:00 a.m. EST