

Illinois Poised to Help Pets

House Bill 4804, which will help pets in major disasters or emergencies, waits for Governor Rod Blagojevich's signature.

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Illinois could become the 10th state to adopt laws to create pet disaster plans. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, many states are addressing the need to include pets and service animals in evacuation and other disaster plans. Illinois is set to become the 10th state to adopt legislation that would require the emergency operations to include pet disaster plans. H.B. 4804, introduced by Representative Art Tenhouse, currently waits for the signature of Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich. The ASPCA urges the governor to sign this bill into law.

"We see everyday more and more evidence of how dear pets are to peoples' hearts," said Ed Sayres, ASPCA president and CEO. "It is only logical to consider them when planning for events and incidents that significantly impact human life. Indeed, as humane citizens who are responsible for the well-being of animals, we owe it to them."

Other states with similar laws include California, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and Vermont. In October 2006, President Bush signed the PETS Act, which is federal legislation that requires the inclusion of companion animals in disaster planning at the state and local levels.