

## Illinois Governor Signs Pet Disaster Bill

**Illinois becomes the 10th state to pass legislation that includes service animals and pets in disaster plans.**

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New legislation in Illinois will include service animals and pets in disaster plans. (Stock photo) Last Friday, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich signed H.B. 4804, which requires the Illinois emergency operations plan to consider the needs of people with pets and service animals following a major disaster or emergency. The bill was introduced by state Rep. Art Tenhouse (R-93).

With the signing of the bill, Illinois becomes the 10th state to pass legislation that includes pets in disaster plans. Other states with similar laws include California, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and Vermont. New Mexico passed a resolution that accounts for pets in times of emergency or disaster. Similar bills are pending in Virginia, Washington, Connecticut, Arizona and Texas.

Last October, President Bush signed federal legislation that considers pets in disaster plans. The Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act requires the inclusion of companion animals in disaster planning at the state and local levels and authorizes FEMA to assist with disaster plans for pets and service animals.