

SUMMARY OF NO. 15-07

This proposed law would amend requirements for how animal shelters keep records and make them available to the public. The proposed law would require animal-control officers, law-enforcement officers, humane investigators, and animal-shelter custodians taking custody of any animal to create a record of the date on which the animal was taken into custody; the date the record is made; a physical description of the animal; the location where custody was taken; and the identity of the owner, if known. Upon intake of the animal, the proposed law would require an animal shelter to record the reason that the animal was taken into custody and to record all animals in the shelter's custody broken down by type of animal and how each animal came to reside in the shelter. When an animal leaves the shelter, the proposed law would require the shelter to make a record stating why the animal left the shelter, as well as the shelter's total animal population at that time. The proposed law would also require shelters to track the number of animals in their custody at the beginning and end of each calendar year.

Under the proposed law, all shelters, whether public or privately operated, would be required to send their records to the clerk of the city or town in which the shelter operates. Public shelters would also be required to file their records with the state Department of Agricultural Resources' Division of

Animal Health at the end of each month in which any information is added or updated. The proposed law would require the Department to establish and maintain a website publishing the records it receives from animal shelters. The proposed law would require any custodian of public animal shelter records to waive fees and copying charges for producing such records.

The proposed law would take effect January 1, 2017. The proposed law states that, if any of its parts were declared invalid, the other parts would stay in effect.