

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Regulated Industries Committee

BILL: SB 654

INTRODUCER: Senator Hays and others

SUBJECT: Euthanasia of Domestic Animals

DATE: January 30, 2012 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Harrington	Imhof	RI	Pre-meeting
2.	_____	_____	HR	_____
3.	_____	_____	BC	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

The bill expands the list of drugs that can be used to euthanize domestic animals and adds certain drugs that may be used to immobilize domestic animals. The bill allows the Board of Pharmacy, at the request of the Board of Veterinary Medicine, to expand the list of drugs that may be used to euthanize or immobilize domestic animals in the future if findings support the addition of drugs to the list for humane and lawful treatment of animals. The bill limits the possession and use of these drugs to animal control officers and employees or agents of animal control agencies and humane societies while operating within the scope of their employment or official duties.

The bill eliminates food-based delivery of euthanasia drugs as an acceptable method of euthanization. The bill permits euthanasia by intracardial injection only upon an unconscious dog or cat which exhibits no corneal reflex.

Lastly, the bill requires an animal control officer, a wildlife officer, and an animal disease diagnostic laboratory to report to the Department of Health knowledge of any animal bite, diagnosis or suspicion of a group of animals having a similar disease, or any symptom or syndrome that may pose a threat to humans.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2012.

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 828.055, 828.058, and 381.0031.

II. Present Situation:

Animal Control in Florida

Animal control agencies operated by a humane society or by a city, county or other political subdivision are generally responsible for enforcing state, county and local animal control laws and regulations in Florida. Animal control officers employed or appointed by a county or municipality are authorized to investigate violations of animal control laws or regulations.¹ The governing body of a county or municipality is authorized to enact animal control ordinances.²

Euthanasia of Domestic Animals in Florida

Euthanasia is the act or practice of killing or permitting the death of sick or injured animals in a relatively painless way for reasons of mercy.³ National euthanasia statistics are difficult to calculate because there is not a mandatory requirement for states to keep records on the number of animals taken in, adopted, euthanized, or reclaimed.⁴ It is estimated that 3.7 million animals were euthanized nationwide in 2008.⁵

In Florida, the only approved drugs for use in euthanasia of domestic animals are sodium pentobarbital or a sodium pentobarbital derivative. Euthanasia drugs are to be delivered by the following methods, in order of preference:⁶

- Intravenous injection by hypodermic needle;
- Intraperitoneal injection by hypodermic needle;
- Intracardial injection by hypodermic needle; or
- Solution or powder added to food.

In order for an animal control agency or humane agency to provide euthanasia services, the agency must obtain a permit from the Department of Health (DOH) to purchase, possess, and use the euthanasia drugs approved by statute. Current law states that the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) is responsible for receiving the application for, and issuing, the permit.⁷ The law was enacted at a time when health care professional boards were administratively housed under DPBR. However, due to reorganization of DBPR and the DOH, DOH and the Board of Pharmacy have primary responsibility for evaluating applications for the permit, issuing the permit, and taking disciplinary actions against holders of the permit for violations of law and rule.

The Board of Pharmacy, within the DOH, has adopted rules to govern the issuance of permits to county or municipal animal control agencies or humane agencies registered with the Secretary of State to purchase, possess, and use sodium pentobarbital and sodium pentobarbital with lidocaine

¹ Section 828.27, F.S.

² Section 828.27(2), F.S.

³ See Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary at: www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/euthanasia (last viewed January 30, 2012).

⁴ See American Humane Association at: <http://www.americanhumane.org/animals/stop-animal-abuse/fact-sheets/animal-shelter-euthanasia.html> (last viewed January 30, 2012).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Section 828.058(1), F.S.

⁷ Section 828.055(2), F.S.

to euthanize sick, injured or abandoned domestic animals.⁸ Currently, there are 105 active animal control shelter permits with the Board of Pharmacy. The initial cost of the permit is \$50.00 and is renewable biennially.⁹ The Department of Business and Professional Regulation issues exemption letters to entities which authorize the entities to possess immobilizers without violating s. 499.03, F.S., which imposes criminal sanctions for the unauthorized possession of habit-forming, toxic, harmful, or new drugs.¹⁰ The Department of Business and Professional Regulation does not charge a fee for issuing the exemption letter.

Euthanasia can only be performed by a licensed veterinarian or an employee or agent of an agency, animal shelter or other facility operated for the collection and care of stray, neglected, abandoned, or unwanted animals if the employee or agent has completed an euthanasia technician certification course.¹¹ However, any law enforcement officer, veterinarian, officer or agent of a municipal or county animal control unit, or officer or agent of any society or association for the prevention of cruelty to animals may destroy a sick or injured animal by shooting the animal or injecting it with a barbiturate drug if the officer or agent finds the animal so injured or sick as to appear useless and suffering, and the officer or agent reasonably believes the animal is imminently near death or cannot be cured, and a reasonable attempt is made to locate the owner of the animal or a veterinarian for consultation regarding destruction of the animal.¹²

Disease Reporting

Section 381.0031, F.S., requires certain medical providers, any hospital licensed under ch. 395, F.S., and any laboratory licensed under ch. 483, F.S., to report to the DOH the diagnosis or suspicion of a disease of public health importance.¹³ The DOH is required to periodically issue a list of infectious and noninfectious diseases which it determines to be a threat to public health and therefore of public health importance.¹⁴ The current list of diseases or conditions to be reported includes, but is not limited to:¹⁵

- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS);
- Amebic Encephalitis;
- Botulism;
- Chlamydia;
- Cholera;
- Diphtheria;
- Gonorrhea;
- Hepatitis A, B, C, D, E and G;
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV);
- Influenza;
- Lyme disease;

⁸ Section 828.055(1), F.S.; *see also* ch. 64B16-29, F.A.C.

⁹ Chapter 64B16-29.002(1)(a) and (b), F.A.C.

¹⁰ Section 499.03(1), F.S.

¹¹ Section 828.058(4)(a), F.S.

¹² Section 828.05(3), F.S.

¹³ Section 381.0031(1), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 381.0031(2), F.S.

¹⁵ The complete list of diseases or conditions to be reported is codified at Rule 64D-3.029(3), F.A.C.

- Meningitis;
- Mumps;
- Plague;
- Rabies;
- Smallpox;
- Syphilis;
- Tuberculosis;
- Typhoid fever;
- Viral hemorrhagic fevers;
- West Nile virus; and
- Yellow fever.

The diseases or conditions listed in the rule must be reported by telephone, facsimile, electronic data transfer, or other confidential means of communication to the County Health Department having jurisdiction for the area in which the disease or condition is found and within the time period specified by rule.¹⁶ Persons required to report the diseases are not prohibited from reporting other diseases not included on the list.¹⁷ Additional rules provide for written reports to be issued by practitioners, laboratories, medical facilities, and other persons following the initial reporting of a disease or condition of public health significance.¹⁸

The following persons are required to report suspected rabies exposure to humans, as well as conditions that are diagnosed or suspected in animals, pursuant to ch. 64D-3.039(2), F.A.C.:¹⁹

- Animal control officers operating under s. 828.27, F.S.;
- Employees or agents of a public or private agency, animal shelter, or other facility that is operated for the collection and care of stray, neglected, abandoned, or unwanted animals;
- Animal disease laboratories licensed under s. 585.61, F.S.;
- Wildlife officers operating under s. 372.07, F.S.;
- Wildlife rehabilitators permitted by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; and
- Florida state park personnel operating under s. 258.007, F.S.²⁰

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill expands the list of controlled substances and legend drugs that can be used for the purpose of euthanasia or immobilization of animals to include:

- Tiletamine hydrochloride, alone or in combination with zolazepam (Telazol®);
- Xylazine (Rompun®);

¹⁶ Chapter 64D-3.029(1), F.A.C.; the time period for reporting varies according to the severity of the threat to public health posed by the identified disease or condition.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Chapter 64D-3.030, F.A.C. (notification by practitioners); ch. 64D-3.031, F.A.C. (notification by laboratories); ch. 64D-3.032, F.A.C. (notification by medical facilities); and ch. 64D-3.033, F.A.C. (notification by others).

¹⁹ The rule provides that “[a]ny grouping or clustering of animals having similar diseases, symptoms or syndromes that may indicate the presence of a threat to humans including those for biological agents associated with terrorism shall be reported.”

²⁰ Chapter 64D-3.033(1), F.A.C.

- Ketamine;
- Acepromazine maleate (Atravet®);
- Acetylpromazine (Acezine 2);
- Etorphine (Imobilon®); and
- Yohimbine hydrochloride, alone or combined with Atipamezole (Antisedan®).

At the request and recommendation of the Board of Veterinary Medicine, the Board of Pharmacy may adopt a rule to increase the number of controlled substances and legend drugs available to euthanize injured, sick, or abandoned domestic animals or to chemically immobilize such animals upon a finding that such additions are necessary for the humane and lawful treatment of those animals.

Any county or municipal animal control agency or any humane society registered with the Secretary of State may apply to the Department of Business and Professional Regulation for a permit to purchase, possess, and use the drugs listed above. The bill provides that the possession and use of these drugs is limited to those employees or agents of the permittee certified in accordance with s. 828.058, F.S.,²¹ or s. 828.27, F.S.,²² while operating in the scope of their employment or official duties with the permittee. The Board of Pharmacy may revoke or suspend the permit upon a determination that the permittee is using any of these drugs for any purpose other than that set forth in s. 828.055, F.S., or if the permittee fails to follow the rules of the board regarding proper storage and handling.

The bill provides that a lethal solution of an agent approved by the Board of Veterinary Medicine to euthanize an animal must be used in the following order of preference:

- Intravenous injection by hypodermic needle;
- Intraperitoneal injection by hypodermic needle; or
- If the dog or cat is unconscious with no corneal reflex,²³ intracardial injection by hypodermic needle.

The bill deletes the authority to euthanize an animal through a solution or powder added to the animal's food.

Lastly, the bill requires an animal control officer, a wildlife officer, and an animal disease diagnostic laboratory to report knowledge of any animal bite, any diagnosis or suspicion of a

²¹ Section 828.058(4)(a), F.S., refers to licensed veterinarians or employees or agents of a private or public agency, animal shelter, or other facility that is operated for the collection and care of stray, neglected, abandoned, or unwanted animals, provided the employee or agent has successfully completed a 16-hour euthanasia technicians certification course.

²² Section 828.27(1)(b), F.S., defines "animal control officer" as any person employed or appointed by a county or municipality who is authorized to investigate, on public or private property, civil infractions related to animal control or cruelty and to issue citations. Such officer may carry a device to chemically subdue and tranquilize an animal, provided that such officer has successfully completed a minimum of 16 hours of training in marksmanship, equipment handling, safety and animal care, and can demonstrate proficiency in chemical immobilization of animals in accordance with guidelines prescribed in the Chemical Immobilization Operational Guide of the American Humane Association.

²³ Cornea reflex is tested by touching the cornea with a sterile object (a drop of water or saline can be used) and noting whether the animal blinks and withdraws the eye into the orbit. See http://ruralareavet.org/PDF/Anesthesia-Patient_Monitoring.pdf (Last visited January 31, 2012).

grouping or clustering of animals having similar disease, or any symptom or syndrome that may indicate the presence of a threat to humans.²⁴

The bill becomes effective July 1, 2012.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The bill allows all animal control agencies to use the same permit used to obtain drugs for euthanasia to obtain drugs for chemical immobilization without paying additional fees. In addition, animal control agencies will not be required to contract with veterinarians to obtain certain controlled substances for chemical immobilization. As a result, the bill may result in savings to certain animal control agencies.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Department of Health expects to incur non-recurring costs for rulemaking as required by the bill which can be absorbed with the current budget authority.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

²⁴ This provision is consistent with Rule 64D-3.033, F.A.C., which currently requires animal control officers, animal disease laboratories, and wildlife officers to report suspected rabies exposure to humans and conditions that they diagnose or suspect in any grouping or clustering of animals having similar diseases, symptoms, or syndromes that may indicate the presence of a threat to humans, including those for biological agents associated with terrorism.

VIII. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
