

SUPPORT THE MINNESOTA COMPANION ANIMAL BOARD

The Bill

The Companion Animal Board is about pets and people. This bill will establish a state board dedicated to companion animal (pet) welfare issues, serve those in the community who care for these animals, and support the human-animal bond.



FINDINGS

The pet sector has grown significantly in the past decades and yet there is no state agency in Minnesota with a mission dedicated to pets, pet issues, and those who care for these animals.

PROBLEM

Within state government, pets have been treated as agricultural products. Currently, pet issues are directed to agriculture (livestock producers) for oversight; under this structure, pet issues and the needs of the pet sector are not prioritized.

PURPOSE: EXPERTISE AND EFFICIENCIES

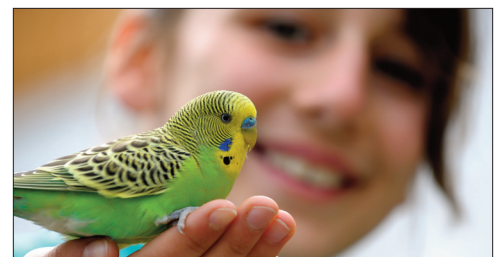
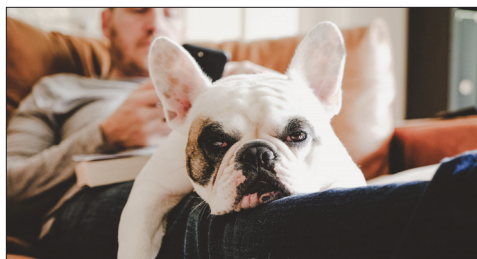
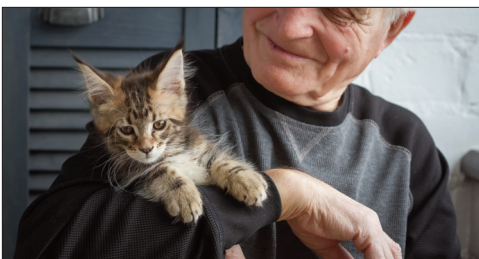
The Companion Animal Board bill will be governed and staffed with experts in pet welfare to lead and respond to pet issues statewide, separating these activities from agricultural interests. The board will create greater effectiveness and efficiencies in how pet issues are addressed by the state, including the impact to people and human health.

GROWING AND EVOLVING NEEDS

The growth of the pet sector has created new issues and demands.

- Over 70% of Minnesota households have at least one pet.
- More families in Minnesota have a dog or cat than children.
- Companion animals improve human lives, providing enjoyment to individuals as well as supporting the physical, social, and mental health needs of Minnesotans.
- The pet industry is estimated (by Morgan Stanley) to be \$277 billion in 2030 (up from \$17 billion in 1994).

Learn more ➡➔



Caring for Pets and Their People



“Wally is my 6-year-old Westie. He helped me understand just how important companion animals are ... Animals are able to form connections with humans that go far beyond ‘being just a pet.’ They are family, they provide joy, they teach empathy, and their unconditional love is immeasurable.” – Stephanie S., New Hope, MN

SCOPE

“Companion animal” (pets) is defined under existing law: Minn. Stat. §343.20 subd. 6 and §346.36 subd. 6. The focus of this board is pet welfare and civil law. Bill excludes wildlife, racehorses, and agricultural animals used for food or product.

POWERS AND DUTIES

The Companion Animal Board will have three primary duties:

- **Regulatory Enforcement.** Regulatory enforcement of the commercial dog and cat breeder law and kennel and dealer law will be transferred from the MN Board of Animal Health (BAH) to the Companion Animal Board. This will provide needed pet expertise and free up the BAH to focus on controlling dangerous animal diseases.
- **Communication and Education.** The Companion Animal Board will be an expert resource on pet welfare issues for government officials, non-profits, and the public. It will support humane education and outreach for pet welfare, and disseminate information to promote responsible pet care.
- **Services and Resources.** The CAB will support pet-related services statewide through a grant program; grants will be available to nonprofits, veterinary clinics, local government, and academic institutions. The CAB will lead discussions on pet issues of importance, supporting efficiencies and collaborations in the pet sector.

ISSUES AND NEEDS

As the growth of the pet sector has exploded, so too have the demands and needs for pet services and resources. Examples:

- Access to veterinary care
- Housing and care for unwanted animals
- Irresponsible pet breeding
- Feral cat colonies
- Temporary pet housing and crisis intervention
- Spay-neuter services to decrease pet overpopulation
- Animal rescue standards
- Animal shelter support
- Animal companionship for chronic health issues, such as PTSD, anxiety, depression, cardiac disease
- Animal care for the elderly and disabled
- Care of lost, abandoned, and stray animals
- Statewide pet food banks
- Emergency/disaster relief planning for pets
- Education and outreach on pet care and tips
- Statewide collaboration of pet-related resources
- Homelessness and pets
- Assistance to local governments for pet-related issues