

SUPPORT THE MINNESOTA

COMPANION ANIMAL BOARD

The purpose of the Companion Animal Board (S.F. 1136/H.F. 1168) is to promote the welfare of companion animals (pets), serve those in the community who care for these animals, and support the human-animal bond.

WHY THE COMPANION ANIMAL BOARD (CAB) IS NEEDED

Communities across Minnesota are grappling with pet welfare issues — people in crisis can't find temporary pet housing, cities are unprepared for dealing with feral cat colonies, pets in crisis need accessible emergency veterinary care, and certain rural areas are still without animal shelters. These are just a few of the many issues communities are facing.

Local cities, veterinary clinics, animal shelters, human shelters, animal rescue organizations, social workers, and others are stretched thin providing services for pets and pet guardians. While state government supports livestock production and wildlife management, there is no state agency providing assistance or funding for the pet sector.

WHAT THE COMPANION ANIMAL BOARD WILL DO

The Companion Animal Board bill establishes a new state board dedicated to companion animal (pet) welfare issues, making these issues a priority. It separates pet issues from agricultural interests and oversight and provides a central source within state government with a dedicated mission to address the needs of pets and those who care for these animals.

Duties of the CAB will include 1) regulatory enforcement of the dog and cat breeder law and the kennel and dealer law; 2) communication and education on pet welfare issues; and 3) statewide coordination of services and resources for pet care supported by a grant program.

See veterinary benefits on next page.



COMPANION ANIMAL BOARD

Veterinary professionals have seen firsthand the changes in the pet sector. Almost 70% of Minnesota households have at least one pet, and most Minnesotans consider these animals to be part of the family. The Companion Animal Board addresses this change and provides benefits to veterinary professionals.

THE COMPANION ANIMAL BOARD (CAB) WILL:

- ✓ **Provide grant funding to veterinarians and others.** The CAB will provide grants to veterinary clinics and practices, local government, non-profits, and others that support pet welfare needs in communities.
- ✓ **Support solutions to the staffing crisis in the veterinary field.** The CAB grant program will dedicate specific funds toward solutions to the staffing shortage, such as support for training or other methods to attract and retain veterinary technicians.
- ✓ **Provide pet welfare and human welfare expertise.** Pets provide companionship and other health benefits to people. Through board membership and staffing, the CAB will be led by experts in companion animal (pet) welfare and human welfare, separating oversight from agricultural interests and livestock production.
- ✓ **Help with client (pet guardian) needs.** The CAB will help veterinarians address client needs by providing access to statewide pet services and resources through a CAB website focused on pet care and pet issues. The CAB will also lead listening sessions and discussions about pet-related topics and community needs.
- ✓ **Enforce the dog and cat breeder law and the kennel and dealer law.** The CAB will effectively enforce the dog and cat breeder law and the kennel and dealer law (licensing animal shelters) through expertise in pet welfare, including education and promotion of enrichment and socialization practices.
- ✓ **Focus on pets and people.** The CAB is about caring for pets and their people, addressing the human-animal bond and assisting all the organizations and businesses that care for these companions.

THE CAB WILL NOT:

- ✗ **WILL NOT: Impact veterinary practices.** All authority of veterinary practices remains with the Board of Veterinary Medicine pursuant to chapter 156.
- ✗ **WILL NOT: Impact control of dangerous animal disease.** All authority of dangerous animal disease remains with the Board of Animal Health (BAH) pursuant to chapter 35.
- ✗ **WILL NOT: Impact agriculture.** The CAB specifically excludes farmed animals used for food and agricultural products as well as wild animals, regulated (i.e, tigers, primates) animals, and racehorses.
- ✗ **WILL NOT: Impact BAH funding.** Duties for the two pet regulatory laws will be transferred to the CAB with new funding; existing funds for personnel remain with the Board of Animal Health.