

## Illinois Pet Disaster Bill Signed Into Law

**Legislation mandates that state disaster plans include care for pets and service animals.**

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The governor of Illinois has signed into law a bill that requires the state's emergency operations plan to include providing care and shelter for pets and service animals.

On Jan. 19, 2007 – a year and a day after the legislation was introduced by state Rep. Art Tenhouse – Gov. Rod Blagojevich signed HB 4804 into law. It legally requires the Illinois emergency operations plan to consider the needs of people who must evacuate their homes with pets and service animals following a major disaster or emergency.

With the bill's signing, Illinois becomes the 10th state to pass legislation to include pets in disaster plans. Similar bills are pending in Arizona, Connecticut, Texas, Virginia and Washington state.

In October 2006, President Bush signed into law the federal Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act, which requires the inclusion of companion animals in state and local disaster plans submitted to the federal government in order for that jurisdiction to qualify for U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency funding. It also authorizes FEMA to assist with disaster plans for pets and service animals.