

Round Two for California Pet Spay-Neuter Bill

Hearing Wednesday at State Capitol is expected to draw supporters, foes of legislation.

Posted: June 25, 2008, 5 a.m. EDT

California Assembly Bill 1634, which sought to mandate statewide dog and cat sterilization, was significantly amended in the state's Senate bill and no longer requires pets to be spayed or neutered.

Instead, the bill stiffens penalties for existing laws associated with dogs and cats who aren't spayed or neutered. The amendment also strips the bill of its "California Healthy Pets Act" title and shifts the legislation from the Health and Safety Code to the Food and Agricultural Code.

Despite the major revision, opponents of the bill, including PetPAC, continue to fight the legislation, citing due process concerns. PetPAC plans to lobby legislators Wednesday, June 25, when the Senate Committee on Local Government plans a hearing on the bill at 9:30 a.m.

The bill would increase the fines to pet owners for intact cats and dogs impounded by animal control agencies from \$35 to \$50 for the first occurrence. For dogs, that fine would increase from \$50 to \$100 for the second occurrence and require neutering of the dog, at the owner's expense, on the third occurrence.

Cats would need to be spayed or neutered at the owner's expense following the second occurrence. The amended legislation calls for an additional fine for intact animals when the owner is cited for another animal-related complaint, except for excessive noise or barking.

The fines, which would be in addition to fines associated with the original complaint, would be \$50 for first occurrence for cats or dogs. Then, just as with the impound fines, that fine for dogs would be \$100 for the second occurrence and require neutering, at the owner's expense, on the third occurrence.

Cats would need to be spayed or neutered at the owner's expense following the second occurrence. The fines can be waived if the pet owner presents written proof from a licensed veterinarian that the pet was neutered within 14 business days of the citation.

PetPAC, formed in 2007 to defeat the bill when introduced, expressed concern that the legislation allows nonprofit corporations such as humane societies to levy fines and to receive money from fines levied, without direct government involvement. Many local jurisdictions in California contract out animal control duties to such private organizations.

The amended legislation has been re-referred to the Senate Committee on Local Government.

To read more about AB 1634 and California' spay-neuter legislation, [click here](#).