

## State May Force Dog Sellers to Tout Insurance

**New Jersey pet stores may need to give out lists of pet insurance providers.**

Under a measure recently introduced in New Jersey's state assembly, businesses that sell dogs, cats, and other pets would be required to notify customers about pet health insurance.

Assembly Bill 3488 would require all licensed kennels, pet shops, shelters, pounds, and anyone in the business of selling pets to provide written notice to customers regarding the availability of pet health insurance offered in New Jersey.

The bill would require the notice be a separate document that a consumer would get at the "point-of-sale" of the pet. New Jersey's commissioner of health and senior services is charged with determining the information required on the written notice. The only specified requirement regarding the information to be included is contact information for insurers currently offering pet health insurance in the state.

Another bill would increase twenty-fold fines to pet shops that violate certain laws and regulations, such as a licensing requirement. Current penalties range from \$5 to \$50; the proposed penalties would range from \$100 to \$1,000.

According to the bill, the purpose of the measure is to "enhance the power of the state and its municipalities to enforce certain laws regulating the treatment of animals."

New Jersey law defines a "pet shop" as "any place of business which is not part of a kennel, wherein animals, including, but not limited to, dogs, cats, birds, fish, reptiles, rabbits, hamsters, or gerbils, are kept or displayed chiefly for the purpose of sale to individuals for personal appreciation and companionship rather than for business or research purposes."

Both bills have been assigned to the state's Assembly Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources. No hearing date has been set for either.