

Dog, Cat Licenses May Be Required in Arkansas

Legislation would set annual fees for owners of multiple animals.

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A new bill to require owners of multiple dogs or cats to get annual licenses has been introduced in the Arkansas Senate.

The bill, SB 864 by Sen. Sue Madison, states that owners of 12 or more dogs, cats, or any combination of dogs and cats must purchase an annual license from the Arkansas Agriculture Department. Under the bill, an owner means a person who meets the following criteria: Has a right of property in a dog or cat. Keeps or harbors a dog or cat. Has a dog or cat in his or her care. Acts as a custodian of a dog or cat.

The license fee for an owner of 12 to 24 dogs and/or cats would be set at \$250. For owners of more than 24 dogs and/or cats, the fee goes up to \$1,000.

SB 864 provides exemptions to the following: A veterinarian or veterinary facility that provides services under the Arkansas Veterinary Medical Practice Act. A boarding kennel or grooming business that acts as a temporary custodian in exchange for compensation. An agency of the federal government acting under its official duties. An agency of the federal, state, county, municipality, or other governmental or political subdivision acting under official duties. An entity owned or managed by a state or local government agency that is responsible for animal control. Research facilities.

In addition, the bill states that an animal control officer may investigate a case where there has been a complaint, "or upon his or her own motion." The investigation may include the inspection of dogs or cats on the premises and any place where the animals are kept.

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