

Pet Hoarders Targeted in Hawaii

Dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, and other domesticated pets would fall under the law.

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Legislation in Hawaii would make it a misdemeanor to hoard pets, although it doesn't specify how many animals would warrant action.

Senate Bill 2303 defines animal hoarding as someone who "negligently possesses more than a typical number of pet animals" and fails to provide for those pets.

It further defines a hoarder as someone who:

"Displays an inability to recognize or understand the nature of, or has reckless disregard for, the conditions under which the pet animals are living and the deleterious impact the conditions have on the pet animals' and owner's health and well-being."

Dogs, cats, birds, rabbits, guinea pigs, and any animal not meant to be eaten would fall under the law, which would include a domesticated pig or pet goose, but not those raised as livestock.

Introduced earlier this year, the bill passed a Senate committee in early March and was referred to the House Judiciary Committee last week. No hearing has been set.

The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council, a Washington, D.C.-based group that represents the pet industry, called the bill's language "very vague."

"We feel that this legislation needs to be more defined in order to be effective," it wrote in a Pet Alert.