

ANIMAL LAW SECTION

Respectfully submits the following position on:

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HB 4915

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The Animal Law Section is not the State Bar of Michigan itself, but rather a Section which members of the State Bar choose voluntarily to join, based on common professional interest.

The position expressed is that of the Animal Law Section only and is not the position of the State Bar of Michigan.

To date, the State Bar does not have a position on this matter.

The total membership of the Animal Law Section is 244.

The position was adopted after an electronic discussion and vote. The number of members in the decision-making body is 16. The number who voted in favor to this position was 11. The number who voted opposed to this position was 4.

Report on Public Policy Position

Name of Section:

Animal Law Section

Contact person:

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Bill Number:

[HB 4915](#) (McCready) Animals; animal shelters; pet shop, dog pound, and animal shelters act; modify to provide for minimum holding times and certain record-keeping requirements, and prohibit local units of government from prohibiting sterilization release programs. Amends secs. 1, 2, 6 & 9a of [1969 PA 287](#) (MCL [287.331](#) et seq.) & adds secs. 8b, 8c & 9c.

Date position was adopted:

January 11, 2016

Process used to take the ideological position:

Position adopted after an electronic discussion and vote

Number of members in the decision-making body:

16

Number who voted in favor and opposed to the position:

11 Voted for position

4 Voted against position

0 Abstained from vote

1 Did not vote (absent)

Position:

Support

Explanation of the position, including any recommended amendments:

This bill would amend several sections of the Animal Industry Act. This bill would codify hold times for dogs and cats in animal control and animal protection shelters in Michigan. The bill would also prevent local units of government from prohibiting sterilization-release programs. Currently, hold times in Michigan (the length of time a stray cat or dog has to be held by a shelter before disposition by adoption, transfer, or humane euthanasia) are a matter of debate. The common practice of holding a dog or cat without traceable evidence of ownership (e.g., a collar and tag or microchip) for four days and a dog or cat with traceable evidence of ownership for seven days is based on a statute that regulates municipal shelters selling dogs and/or cats for research purposes.

The bill would allow a municipality to set longer hold times than set by the bill if desired. The bill would codify a four-day hold for dogs without traceable evidence of ownership and a seven-day hold for dogs with traceable evidence of ownership. The bill would require a shelter to hold a cat without traceable evidence of ownership who is not a candidate for immediate live release through adoption or sterilization-release for four days and a cat with traceable evidence of ownership to be held for seven days. A cat who does not have traceable evidence of ownership and is a candidate for live release through adoption or sterilization-release could be held for zero days.

The feline hold times in HB 4915 are supported by current shelter medicine studies that show that the longer a cat stays in a shelter, the less likely it is to have a successful (live) outcome. Cats are quickly stressed and likely to become ill in a shelter environment, no matter how much is done to alleviate their stress. Additionally, national statistics show that only 2% of cats entering shelters are reunited with their owners (and most of those reunions are due to the cat having some form of traceable identification). Most cats entering shelters are unowned, and studies show that longer hold times do not increase reunions and, in fact, result in illness and a decreased likelihood of a good outcome.

HB 4915 is in the best interest of people and animals in Michigan because it codifies hold times based on current science and statistics.

The text of any legislation, court rule, or administrative regulation that is the subject of or referenced in this report.

<http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2015-HB-4915>