

Date of Hearing: April 4, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Freddie Rodriguez, Chair

AB 1648 (Maienschein) – As Amended March 23, 2022

SUBJECT: Disaster preparedness: local government: animal natural disaster evacuation plan

SUMMARY: This bill would require a city or county permitted kennel to create and submit an animal natural disaster evacuation plan, as specified. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires a city or county that requires a kennel license or permit to operate a kennel within its jurisdiction, to require that the kennel owner create and submit an animal natural disaster evacuation plan for any kennel covered by the license or permit as a condition of receiving said license or permit.
- 2) Requires the evacuation plan to contain specific contact information, documentation, and protocols, as specified.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) in the Office of the Governor and provides that OES is responsible for the state's emergency and disaster response services for natural, technological, or manmade disasters and emergencies.
- 2) Provides Cal OES, in coordination with all interested state agencies with designated response roles in the state emergency plan and interested local emergency management agencies, is required to jointly establish by regulation a standardized emergency management system for use by all emergency response agencies.
- 3) Requires Cal OES to approve and adopt, and incorporate the California Animal Response Emergency System (CARES) program developed under the oversight of the Department of Food and Agriculture into the standardized emergency management system.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown.

COMMENTS:

Purpose of this bill: According to the author's office, "Recent wildfires in California have caused many animals to be lost or left behind during evacuations. These animals are often separated from their owners for long periods of time, lost indefinitely, or killed during an emergency. AB 1648 would require owners of permitted animals to do advance planning for these emergency situations. With advanced plans, it is more likely that these animals will not be lost or killed during a disaster."

Background: Animals play an integral role in society. In many homes, pets are considered members of the family. Additionally, working animals provide valuable services to the community, and production livestock contribute millions to the economy.

California is home to nearly 19 million domestic animals. Polls conducted in 2012 estimate that California is home to 6.7 million dogs and 7.1 million cats. Approximately one out of every three

households in California owns a dog or a cat. The California Department of Food and Agriculture reported in 2012 that there are over 5.5 million cattle, 570,000 sheep, 141,000 goats, 670,000 horses, just over 100,000 hogs, and millions of chickens in the Golden State.

California Animal Response Emergency System: In 2006, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed AB 450 (Yee), which mandated that the California Animal Response Emergency System (CARES) be incorporated into the State Emergency Plan, and that CDFA and Cal OES enter into a Memorandum of Understanding that would require them to incorporate CARES into all levels of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS.) The California Emergency Services Act, Section 8608, includes direction on implementation and authorities of the CARES program.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is required by the government code. The MOU between UC Davis (with the recent addition of the California Veterinary Emergency Team), CDFA and Cal OES is in process, but the parties have agreed informally to outline roles and are moving forward in advance of the MOU. CDFA and Cal OES are also working together to support interagency and volunteer stakeholder engagement for numerous issues that arise relating to animals during disasters.

CARES is an operational guidance to assist with all aspects of animal care and control in the all four phases of a disaster. In the mitigation and preparedness phases, the CARES Unit will assist local government with planning and preparing for animals in disasters. In the response and recovery phases, the CARES system, as one of the core functions of the California Emergency Support Function (ESF) 11, will primarily assist and support the CA-ESF 11 Coordinator in carrying out the responsibilities of the position in response operations. CDFA leads CA-ESF 11 and is supported by other State agencies and stakeholders with similar discipline-specific responsibilities. CA-ESF 11 is responsible for the management and oversight based on its authorities, resources, and capabilities as outlined in the State Emergency Plan (SEP). In addition, CARES provides resources for the public, for animal businesses, for shelters, and for emergency planners. CARES is structured in accordance with the SEMS and the Incident Command System (ICS).

California Veterinary Emergency Team: The 2021-2022 California Budget, and associated trailer bill, allocated \$3 million per year to the University of California, Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine in order to develop the California Veterinary Emergency Team program. This program must support a network of government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals to assist in the evacuation and care of animals and livestock in all stages of a disaster or emergency. When there is not an active emergency, the program will conduct ongoing research, recruit, train and prepare volunteers, and train veterinarians and veterinary students on best practices in shelter and emergency medicine.

Arguments in support: Social Compassion in Legislation writes in support of the bill, stating, “California continues to experience catastrophic wildfires of historic proportion devastating both Northern and Southern California. These disasters, among other things, tragically highlighted the serious need for preparing and executing evacuation plans for animals. In the chaos of wildfire, animals are, and will be, left to suffer and perish in the absence of pre-planning by their owners. Furthermore, when animals are not evacuated by their owners, first responders and “good Samaritans” are put in danger while trying to save those animals.”

They continue, “Unfortunately, we learned from the recent wildfires that people are unprepared to protect their animals, as thousands died unable to escape. Having a plan in place increases the chance that animals will be saved in the event of a catastrophic wildfire while saving time and resources of first responders.”

Prior legislation:

SB 547 (Glazer, 2020) would have required the University of California, Davis (UCD) School of Veterinary Medicine to develop a program to assist in coordinating and training a network of government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals to care for household and domestic animals and livestock during emergencies. It was held in Assembly Agriculture and incorporated into the budget by AB 132 (Committee on Budget), Chapter 144, Statutes of 2021.

AB 2568 (Maienschein, 2020) was substantively similar to AB 1648 and died in the Assembly Governmental Organization Committee. This bill would have required a city or county that requires a kennel license or permit to operate a kennel within its jurisdiction, to require, as a condition for obtaining the kennel license or permit, that the kennel owner create and submit to the city or county an animal natural disaster evacuation plan for any kennel covered by the license or permit.

AB 486 (Limón, 2019) was substantively similar to AB 1648 and held in the Assembly Appropriations Committee. This bill would have required a city or county that requires a kennel license or permit to operate a kennel within its jurisdiction, to require, as a condition for obtaining the kennel license or permit, that the kennel owner create and submit to the city or county an animal natural disaster evacuation plan for any kennel covered by the license or permit.

AB 1877 (Limón), Chapter 630, Statutes of 2018. Required OES to create a library of translated emergency notifications and a translation style guide, as specified, and required designated alerting authorities to consider using the library and translation style guide when issuing emergency notifications to the public.

SB 821 (Jackson), Chapter 615, Statutes of 2018. Authorized counties to enter into an agreement to access the contact information of resident accountholders through the records of a public utility, as defined, for the sole purpose of enrolling county residents in a county-operated public emergency warning system.

SB 833 (McGuire), Chapter 617, Statutes of 2018. Required OES, in consultation with specified stakeholders, to develop voluntary guidelines for alerting and warning the public of an emergency, and requires OES to develop an alert and warning training, as specified.

AB 289 (Gray), Chapter 289, Statutes of 2017. Required OES to update the State Emergency Plan on or before January 1, 2019, and every five years thereafter.

AB 2311 (Brown), Chapter 520, Statutes of 2016). Required each county to integrate access and functional needs into its emergency plan upon the next update.

AB 450 (Yee), Chapter 604, Statutes of 2006. Required OES to approve, adopt, and incorporate the CARES program into the SEMS.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

425 Individuals
California Animal Welfare Association
City of Laguna Beach
City of Long Beach
Compassionate Bay
Direct Action Everywhere
Fix Long Beach
Health Education Program for Developing Communities
Paws for Life K9 Rescue
Recycled Love Dog Rescue
San Diego Humane Society and SPCA
Social Compassion in Legislation (Sponsor)
St. John Creative

Opposition

None on file.

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