

HCS HB 1600 -- IMPOUNDMENT OF ANIMALS

SPONSOR: Hobbs (Viebrock)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Conservation and Natural Resources by a vote of 12 to 0.

Currently, any neglected or abused animal may be impounded. This substitute requires that a farm animal weighing more than 50 pounds not be impounded until the district state veterinarian of the Department of Agriculture has examined the animal and determined the animal to be in imminent danger of loss of life or has determined that the condition or conditions deemed to be in violation cannot reasonably be rectified before the disposition hearing. If before the disposition hearing, reasonable attempts to correct the condition have not been made and approved by the veterinarian during a required follow-up visit, the animals may be impounded or destroyed.

If abused or neglected farm animals in the possession of a caregiver are impounded, the authority having custody of the animals is required to make a diligent effort to notify the owner in writing that the animals are impounded.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2007, FY 2008, and FY 2009.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will require farm animals weighing more than 50 pounds to be quarantined and not impounded until a veterinarian of the Department of Agriculture has examined the animal and determined the animal to be in imminent danger. The remainder of the farm animals owned are to be quarantined until the owner has been instructed to correct the animal abuse violation. Impounding only adds considerable undue stress on the animals when no accusations have been proven to be true.

Testifying for the bill were Representatives Viebrock and Dake; Price Keller; Missouri Farm Bureau; and Missouri Federation of Animal Owners.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that it is erecting more barriers to rescue abused and neglected animals. Without additional resources to ensure that the district veterinarian can inspect the animals immediately, the bill could lead to tragedy.

Testifying against the bill were Missouri Alliance for Animal Legislation; and Humane Society of Missouri.

Kristina Jenkins, Legislative Analyst