

## Memorandum Urging Approval

Animals #18

June 29, 2021

A. 7122

By: M of A Lupardo

S. 6713

By: Senator Hinchey

Assembly Committee: Passed

Senate Committee: Passed

Effective Date: Immediately

**AN ACT** to amend the agriculture and markets law, in relation to animal response teams.

**LAW & SECTIONS REFERRED TO:** Section 411 of the Agriculture and Markets Law (new section).

### **THE COMMITTEE ON ANIMALS AND THE LAW SUPPORTS THIS LEGISLATION AND URGES APPROVAL**

This legislation would add a new section 411 to Article 26-B of the Agriculture and Markets Law, which establishes the framework for animal response teams that implement the state emergency and disaster preparedness plans that provide assistance to animals affected by an emergency or disaster in the state. The existing language in Article 26-B addresses the authority of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets to form state and county animal response teams to assist animals in a declared emergency or disaster, and to recruit and train volunteers for those teams. The new Section 411 authorizes the Commissioner to enter into agreements with New York State registered animal welfare organizations to provide any assistance and support needed by the state in the prevention of, preparedness for, response to, and recovery from emergencies and disasters affecting animals.

Article 26-B was enacted by the legislature in 2008 to provide a framework for emergency response teams to work with the state in the Empire State Emergency Response Teams (ESARTs) and County Emergency Response Teams (CARTs) when animals are in need due to an emergency or natural disaster. Services provided by ESARTs and CARTS includes search and rescue, transportation, food and shelter, and other animal care and management needs. New York's formation and organization of the ESART and CARTS implements, at a state level, the principles established on a federal level by the 2006 Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS Act). The PETS Act was enacted in response to the widespread loss and dislocation of animals in southern states during Hurricane Katrina, in which 250,000 abandoned animals are estimated to have died.

The Committee on Animals and the Law has monitored the plight of animals in this state when disasters strike. Members of the Committee have worked directly with CARTs established to provide services to animals during emergencies and disasters. As the governor has mentioned many times, we are now seeing disastrous climate events more frequently than in the past. Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in 2011, and Superstorm Sandy in 2012 are just a few examples of recent storms that have left both people and their animals homeless and in need of food, shelter and other assistance.

The Committee commends The Department of Agriculture and Markets and the State Emergency Management Office for their work in providing assistance to the animals affected by these and other disasters. While the establishment of ESARTs and CARTs was a critical step in forestalling widespread loss and death of animals during an emergency or disaster, this bill goes further by providing experienced and established animal welfare organizations which have resources and are equipped to assist ESARTs and CARTs with animal care. This bill will allow the Department to recruit and enter into agreements with animal welfare organizations that have expertise in working with animals and resources to provide for the rescue, care and sheltering of animals, and it is a logical step forward. Additional resources will allow more animals to be saved and provided the food, shelter and other services they need during an emergency or disaster.

For these reasons, the Committee on Animals and the Law SUPPORTS this legislation and URGES the governor to sign S.6713/A.7122 into law.