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Shelter Animal Euthanasia Amendments
2026 GENERAL SESSION
STATE OF UTAH
Chief Sponsor: Keith Grover
House Sponsor: Anthony E. Loubet

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill deals with the treatment of dogs and cats in an animal shelter.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- defines terms; and
- provides that an animal shelter may euthanize an animal only if no reasonable alternatives to euthanasia are available.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

ENACTS:

11-46-403, Utah Code Annotated 1953

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **11-46-403** is enacted to read:

11-46-403 . Disposition of animals in an animal shelter.

(1) As used in this section:

- (a) "Animal organization" includes both an animal rescue group and an animal shelter.
- (b) "Animal rescue group" includes a private humane society or a private animal welfare organization.
- (c) "Animal shelter" does not include a private humane society or a private animal welfare organization.

(2) An animal held by or in the custody of an animal shelter that is not adopted, transferred

29 to another animal shelter or an animal rescue group, placed into a community cat
30 program as described in Part 3, Community Cat Act, or reclaimed by the animal's owner,
31 may be euthanized:

32 (a) if no reasonable alternatives to euthanasia are available; and

33 (b) in accordance with the requirements of this part.

34 (3)(a) An animal shelter may euthanize an animal:

35 (i) only after:

36 (A) the holding period for the animal required by Section 11-46-103 is expired;

37 (B) notifying animal shelter and animal rescue groups, except as provided in
38 Subsection (5), that have expressed an interest in receiving animals at risk of
39 euthanasia;

40 (C) no animal shelter or animal rescue group requests the transfer of the animal
41 within two business days after the day on which the animal shelter makes the
42 notice described in Subsection (3)(a)(i)(A); and

43 (D) no animal shelter or animal rescue group collects the animal within two
44 business days after the day on which the animal shelter makes the notice
45 described in Subsection (3)(a)(i)(A);

46 (ii) to prevent unnecessary suffering due to serious injury or disease, in accordance
47 with Subsection 11-46-103(3); or

48 (iii) if the animal is a dog that has been determined to be dangerous or vicious under
49 state or local law.

50 (b) The time periods described in Subsections (3)(a)(i)(C) and (D) may run concurrently
51 with:

52 (i) the holding period required by Section 11-46-103; and

53 (ii) any holding period required by an applicable local ordinance.

54 (4)(a) An animal shelter may provide the notice described in Subsection (3)(a)(i)(B) in
55 accordance with the animal shelter's established internal policies and procedures.

56 (b) An animal organization is responsible for monitoring messages left for the animal
57 organization.

58 (c) If an animal organization maintains an electronic or other digital forum in which an
59 animal shelter may post notices about animals available for placement, the animal
60 organization that maintains the forum is responsible for monitoring the forum.

61 (5)(a) Nothing in Subsection (3)(a)(i) requires an animal shelter to notify or release an
62 animal to an animal rescue group if the animal shelter knows or has reason to believe

- 63 that:
- 64 (i) any of the animal rescue group's current directors, officers, or employees have
- 65 been convicted of a crime related to animal cruelty or neglect;
- 66 (ii) any of the animal rescue group's current directors, officers, or employees have
- 67 pending charges related to animal cruelty or neglect; or
- 68 (iii) the animal rescue group is constrained by court order that prevents the
- 69 organization from taking in or keeping animals.
- 70 (b) Subsection (5)(a) does not impose an obligation on an animal shelter to investigate,
- 71 verify, or monitor:
- 72 (i) the criminal history or pending criminal charges of or for a director, officer, or
- 73 employee of an animal rescue group; or
- 74 (ii) whether an animal rescue group is subject to a court order described in
- 75 Subsection (5)(a)(iii).
- 76 (6) An animal shelter is not liable for an act or omission under this section if the animal
- 77 shelter acts in good faith based on the information available to the animal shelter at the
- 78 time of the act or omission.

79 Section 2. **Effective Date.**

80 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.