

Senate Resolution Regarding Animal Sheltering During Disasters

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Jen Plumb

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This resolution encourages local governments to update disaster emergency plans to address the needs of individuals who may need to evacuate during a disaster with household pets.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- encourages local governments within the state to incorporate into emergency management and disaster planning the needs of individuals with household pets, consistent with federal guidance and the demonstrated frequency and impact of federally declared disasters in Utah.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Senate of the state of Utah:

WHEREAS, from 2020-2024 Utah experienced 12 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Major Disaster Declarations and Fire Management Assistance Declarations, demonstrating the recurring nature of emergency events in the state;

WHEREAS, Utah families may be required to evacuate their homes with household pets during disasters, and failure for local emergency plans that account for sheltering families and their household pets can hinder or delay safe evacuation;

WHEREAS, a 2015 study on the challenges of managing animals in United States disasters reported that 20 to 30% of human evacuation failures are attributed to pet ownership;

WHEREAS, approximately 58% of Utah households own a household pet and would likely need a safe location to bring themselves and their pets during a disaster;

30 WHEREAS, local governments in Utah are responsible for emergency operations planning,
31 including mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts;

32 WHEREAS, the safety and wellbeing of Utah residents can be enhanced by ensuring that
33 emergency plans account for the sheltering, evacuation, and care of household pets;

34 WHEREAS, the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006 encourages
35 FEMA to create plans to "take into account the needs of individuals with pets and service
36 animals before, during, and following a major disaster or emergency";

37 WHEREAS, the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006 allows for the
38 FEMA to provide funding to local authorities who provide shelters that accommodate people
39 with pets and service animals;

40 WHEREAS, coordinated planning among emergency management agencies, local health
41 departments, animal shelters, veterinary providers, and nonprofit organizations improves
42 community resilience in disasters; and

43 WHEREAS, incorporating household pets into disaster planning can reduce public safety
44 risks, prevent abandonment of animals, and streamline evacuation and sheltering operations:

45 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the state of Utah encourages
46 all local governments in Utah to develop, update, or expand disaster emergency plans to
47 include provisions addressing the needs of individuals with household pets.

48 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the state of Utah encourages local
49 governments to coordinate with emergency management professionals, voluntary animal
50 organizations, public health agencies, and community partners to provide adequate sheltering
51 and care standards for household pets during disasters.

52 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Utah Division
53 of Emergency Management, each county commission or council, each municipal government,
54 and relevant local emergency planning committees.