

Shelter Animal Euthanasia Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Keith Grover

House Sponsor:

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 rescue group" includes a private humane society or a private animal welfare organization.
- (b) "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 to another animal shelter or an animal rescue group, placed into a community cat program as described in Part 3, Community Cat Act, or reclaimed by the animal's owner, may be euthanized:

- 31 (a) if no reasonable alternatives to euthanasia are available; and
32 (b) in accordance with the requirements of this part.
- 33 (3) An animal shelter may euthanize an animal:
34 (a) only after:
35 (i) the holding period for the animal required by Section 11-46-103 is expired;
36 (ii) notifying all animal shelter and animal rescue groups, except as provided in
37 Subsection (4), that have expressed an interest in receiving animals at risk of
38 euthanasia;
39 (iii) no animal shelter or animal rescue group requests the transfer of the animal
40 within two business days after the day on which the animal shelter makes the
41 notice described in Subsection (3)(a)(ii); and
42 (iv) no animal shelter or animal rescue group collects the animal within three
43 business days after the day on which the animal shelter makes the notice described
44 in Subsection (3)(a)(ii); or
45 (b) to prevent unnecessary suffering due to serious injury or disease, in accordance with
46 Subsection 11-46-103(3).
- 47 (4) Nothing in Subsection (3)(a) requires an animal shelter to notify or release an animal to
48 an organization if:
49 (a) any of the organization's current directors, officers, or employees have been
50 convicted of a crime related to animal cruelty or neglect;
51 (b) any of the organization's current directors, officers, or employees have pending
52 charges related to animal cruelty or neglect; or
53 (c) the organization is constrained by court order that prevents the organization from
54 taking in or keeping animals.

55 **Section 2. Effective Date.**

56 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.