

**Representative Norman K Thurston** proposes the following substitute bill:

**ANIMAL CARE AMENDMENTS**

2024 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Norman K Thurston**

Senate Sponsor: Jen Plumb

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This bill addresses the care of animals.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- ▶ defines terms;
- ▶ authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Food to impose civil penalties for certain violations;
- ▶ establishes requirements for animal care by an animal care facility;
- ▶ criminalizes a violation of the animal care requirements as an infraction; and
- ▶ makes technical and conforming changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

ENACTS:

**4-2-903**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**76-9-301.9**, Utah Code Annotated 1953



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

Section 1. Section **4-2-903** is enacted to read:

**4-2-903. Animal care violations.**

(1) "Animal care facility" means the same as that term is defined in Section 76-9-301.9.

(2) The department may, in accordance with this section and as resources allow, respond to a complaint that an animal care facility has violated Subsection 76-9-301(2)(a) or Section 76-9-301.9.

(3) If the department determines that a person has violated Subsection 76-9-301(2)(a) or Section 76-9-301.9, the department may:

(a) impose a civil fine of up to \$500 per violation;

(b) seek a temporary restraining order;

(c) seek an injunction;

(d) seek an order of seizure or condemnation for an animal that is the subject of the violation, if the department has identified a suitable animal care facility that accepts custody of the animal; or

(e) report the circumstances to law enforcement or a prosecutor.

(4) An action by the department under Subsection (3) may precede and does not preclude a criminal penalty or criminal prosecution under Section 76-9-301 or 76-9-301.9.

(5) The department shall deposit a fine imposed under Subsection (3) into the General Fund as a dedicated credit to be used by the department for enforcement of this section.

Section 2. Section **76-9-301.9** is enacted to read:

**76-9-301.9. Animal care facilities -- Definitions -- Penalty.**

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Animal care facility" means an animal rescue, animal sanctuary, or animal shelter.

(b) "Animal rescue" means a person that:

(i) accepts companion animals for the purpose of finding a permanent home for each companion animal;

(ii) does not maintain a central facility for keeping companion animals; and

(iii) uses a system of temporarily fostering the companion animals in a private

57 residence or boarding facility.

58 (c) "Animal sanctuary" means a nonprofit entity, other than a government entity, that:

59 (i) harbors companion animals; and

60 (ii) is used exclusively for the purpose of indefinitely caring for, rehabilitating, or

61 housing companion animals.

62 (d) (i) "Animal shelter" ~~Š→ [means a person that operates a facility for the impoundment or~~  
63 ~~care of companion animals.] means the same as that term is defined in Section 11-46-102. ←Š~~

64 (ii) "Animal shelter" does not include an animal rescue.

65 (e) "Boarding facility" means a facility where a companion animal is kept for the  
66 purpose of caring for the companion animal.

67 (f) "Companion animal" means an animal that is a domestic dog or a domestic cat.

68 (g) "Facility" means a location other than a private residence.

69 (2) For a dog in an animal care facility's possession, the animal care facility shall  
70 ensure that:

71 Ĥ→ [(a) a pregnant dog receives at least one prenatal or postpartum visit with a licensed  
72 veterinarian;] ←Ĥ

73 (b) a female dog does not produce more than one litter in any twelve-month period,  
74 unless a licensed veterinarian has examined the female dog and has determined that it is safe  
75 for the dog to produce more than one litter in a twelve-month period; and

76 (c) a dog under eight weeks of age or a dog not properly weaned is not sold.

77 (3) An animal care facility shall keep records:

78 (a) identifying, to the best of the animal care facility's knowledge, an animal's owner at  
79 the time the animal care facility acquires the animal; and

80 (b) documenting dangerous behaviors, if any, health conditions, and medical care for an  
81 animal in the animal care facility's possession.

82 (4) (a) An animal care facility's violation of a requirement described in this section is  
83 an infraction subject to a fine of \$750.

84 (b) A prosecution under this section does not preclude a prosecution for any other  
85 criminal offense.

86 (5) It is a defense to the penalty imposed under this section that the conduct of the actor  
87 toward the animal was:

88 (a) by a licensed veterinarian using accepted veterinary practice;

89 (b) directly related to bona fide experimentation for scientific research, provided that if  
90 the animal is to be destroyed, the manner employed will not be unnecessarily cruel unless  
91 directly necessary to the veterinary purpose or scientific research involved;

92 (c) permitted under Section [18-1-3](#);

93 (d) by a person who humanely destroys any animal found suffering past recovery for  
94 any useful purpose; or

95 (e) by a person who humanely destroys any apparently abandoned animal found on the  
96 person's property.

97 (6) This section does not prohibit the use of animals in lawful training.

98 (7) A veterinarian who, acting in good faith, reports a violation of this section to law  
99 enforcement or the Department of Agriculture and Food in accordance with Section [4-2-903](#)  
100 may not be held civilly liable for making the report.

101 Section 3. **Effective date.**

102 This bill takes effect on May 1, 2024.