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## Local Government Committee

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### HB 2403

**Brief Description:** Protecting cats and dogs by requiring kennels to meet certain fire safety standards.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Farivar, Alvarado, Reed, Berry, Ortiz-Self, Donaghy, Fitzgibbon, Bronoske, Walen, Fosse, Goodman, Macri, Pollet and Ormsby.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires a kennel operator to be equipped with at least one fire alarm system or fire sprinkler system in every building used for housing animals.
- Requires a kennel operator applying for a business license to certify that the operator's facility has a fire alarm system or fire sprinkler system.
- Requires a kennel operator to provide notice to customers if the operator's business license was suspended or not renewed due to failure to comply with fire system requirements.
- Requires the Department of Revenue (Department) to deny or suspend a kennel operator's license for failing to have a fire alarm system or fire sprinkler system.

**Hearing Date:** 1/23/24

**Staff:** Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

#### **Background:**

##### Business Licenses.

The Department of Revenue (Department) is authorized to issue business licenses. Applicants

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must submit a business license application and, in some cases, must file with the Secretary of State before filing the business license application. The Department must assign an expiration date for each businesses license. The Department may refuse to issue or renew a business license to any person in the following circumstances:

- The person does not have a valid tax registration, if required by a regulatory agency.
- The person is a corporation delinquent in fees or penalties.
- The person has not submitted all required fees.

#### Kennels and Animal Boarding Businesses.

State law does not define what a kennel or boarding business is, but kennel or boarding businesses generally are any premises where a person engages in the business of boarding cats or dogs for private pet owners for a period of time. There are no specific professional licenses for boarders in statute, but local governments may require a specific license. A general business license from the state is required.

#### Fire Code.

The State Building Code Council is responsible for updating, maintaining, and amending the State Building Code (Code). The Code is comprised of various international model codes, including building, residential, and plumbing codes. These codes establish minimum standards for construction, engineering, and safety. Local jurisdictions are required to enforce the provisions of the Code.

The International Fire Code is one of the codes included within the Code. Local officials, often local fire marshals, enforce this code.

#### **Summary of Bill:**

A kennel operator in Washington must:

- have at least one fire alarm system or fire sprinkler system in operating condition in every building that is used to house animals;
- certify in its business license application, and recertify in renewal applications, that its facility has a fire alarm system or a fire sprinkler system;
- include a description and picture of the make and model of the system used in a business license application, as well as certification from a qualified fire inspector attesting that the applicant meets the fire system requirements; and
- notify customers in a conspicuous way if the operator's business license is suspended or is not renewed for the duration of the suspension or nonrenewal, if the suspension or nonrenewal occurs due to failure to comply with the fire system requirements.

The Department must implement procedures for requiring, collecting, and reviewing the fire system certification required as part of the business license and renewal application. If an applicant fails to meet the fire system requirements, the Department must either refuse to issue or renew the business license, or suspend the current business license.

The Department is authorized to adopt rules to implement the requirements above.

A qualified fire inspector may inspect a kennel operator during the course of performing routine inspection. The inspector is authorized to notify the Department if the inspector determines that a kennel operator does not have a fire alarm system or fire sprinkler system.

A fire alarm system is a system that automatically triggers notification to local emergency responders when activated. A qualified fire inspector is the local fire official or a building inspector working for a local government or fire protection district who is qualified to inspect buildings for fire safety or building code compliance. A kennel operator is any person who operates an establishment where either dogs or cats, or both, are maintained for boarding, training, or similar purposes, for a fee or compensation, and is required to have a business license. Veterinary hospitals and animal control facilities are not kennel operators.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** January 21, 2024.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.