
**Public Safety & Emergency
Preparedness Committee**

E2SSB 5106

Brief Description: Providing for animal emergency operations.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Jacobsen, Kohl-Welles, Murray and Rasmussen).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Requires the Washington Military Department to prepare animal emergency planning guidance for local jurisdictions as part of the state's comprehensive emergency management plan.

Hearing Date: 2/25/08

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

On October 6, 2006, President George W. Bush signed into law H. R. 3858 (Public Law 109-308, the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006), that amends the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to require that state and local emergency preparedness operational plans address the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals before, during, and following a major disaster or emergency.

The Emergency Management Division (EMD) of the Washington Military Department administers emergency management and disaster relief programs. The EMD is also responsible for carrying out all emergency management functions to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters resulting from natural and technological hazards. The Director of the Military Department (Director), appointed by the Governor, is required to develop a comprehensive emergency management plan including an analysis of any natural, technological, or human-caused hazards that could affect the state.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan is a comprehensive plan for statewide mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities. The mission of the plan is to help minimize the impact of emergencies and disasters on the people, property, environment, and economy of Washington. The plan takes into consideration the emergencies and disasters likely to occur and describes: the functions and activities necessary to implement emergency management; responsibilities in relation to federal disaster assistance programs; and the use of government, private sector, and volunteer resources.

Local jurisdictions must establish comprehensive local emergency management plans, and submit their plans to the Director for recommendations. Local jurisdictions may also establish and operate joint local emergency management organizations.

Summary of Bill:

As part of the state comprehensive emergency management plan, the EMD, in cooperation with county and local governments, must prepare animal emergency planning guidance for local jurisdictions. The guidance must provide for the evacuation, transportation, and temporary sheltering of pets and service animals during a major disaster or an emergency. In developing the guidance, the EMD must consider:

- allowing owners of service animals to be evacuated, transported, and sheltered with or near their service animals;
- establishing a sufficient number of evacuation shelters equipped to temporarily shelter pets and service animals in close proximity to a human sheltering facility;
- allowing owners and their pets to be evacuated together, whenever possible, provided that human life is not endangered;
- transporting pets or service animals, in cages or carriers that safely and securely confine the animals provided that such transportation does not endanger human life;
- recommending that animal shelters, humane societies, veterinary offices, boarding kennels, breeders, grooming facilities, animal testing facilities, and other entities that normally houses pets or service animals create evacuation plans for the animals housed at their facilities;
- recommending guidance for holding periods for pets or service animals that are sheltered during a major disaster or an emergency; and
- encouraging local jurisdictions to create an educational campaign for owners of pets or service animals that encourages owners to incorporate their animals in their own personal plans in the event of a major disaster or an emergency.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 22, 2008.

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