



NEW JERSEY PET SELLERS TO FACE HEFTY FINES FOR “OVERCROWDING”

The Issue:

New Jersey [Assembly Bill 417](#) calls for the state Department of Health & Senior Services to review current regulations pertaining to standards of care for kennels, pet shops and any other retail establishments selling animals, and to adopt rules and regulations providing for the proper care and housing of animals by kennels, pet shops and other retail establishments selling animals that prohibit the overcrowding of animals. The bill provides no definition for “overcrowding”, but does provide high penalties for any pet seller found guilty of overcrowding.

The Impact:

AB 417 states that the Department of Health and Senior Services must do the following pertaining to kennels, pet shops and other animal retail establishments:

- review existing requirements concerning the proper care and housing of animals;
- determine the proper care and housing for each species of animal sold by such entities;
and
- adopt rules and regulations providing for the proper care and housing in order to prohibit the overcrowding of animals.

If this legislation is passed, any owner of a kennel, pet shop or other retail establishment selling animals found guilty of “overcrowding” will face the following penalties:

- First violation = civil penalty of \$500;
- Second violation = civil penalty of \$1,000;
- Third violation = civil penalty of \$5,000; and
- Fourth violation = revocation of the kennel or pet shop license or certificate of occupancy, if the establishment is not a kennel or a pet shop, pending the appropriate due process for such revocation.

PIJAC Position:

PIJAC strongly supports appropriate standards of care for kennel and pet shop animals, including adequate housing. Minimum enclosure sizes should be based on objective standards established through sound research, and should be guided by prevailing standards, such as those found in USDA regulations implementing the federal Animal Welfare Act.

Recommended Action:

This legislation has not yet been set for hearing but was assigned to the [Assembly Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources](#). Persons concerned about the implications of this measure are encouraged to contact members of that committee to voice your concerns. You may also easily contact your Assemblyman through [PIJAC's Legislative Action Center](#).

For questions or additional information about this legislation, contact PIJAC's Bambi Osborne via email at bambi@pijac.org or by phone at 202-452-1525, x 105.