

**SESSION LAW 2010-31**  
**SENATE BILL 897**

**SECTION 11.4.(k)** The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services may study the State's role in reducing the number of unwanted dogs and cats and in ensuring the humane treatment of dogs and cats by breeders, shelters, and other facilities that house dogs and cats. As part of this study, the Department may do the following:

- (1) Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the need for revisions of or additions to existing regulatory authority designed to address animal welfare issues in the State, including a review of existing State and federal law.
- (2) Evaluate the existing needs among county and State agencies for improving responses to animal welfare incidents.
- (3) Consider the extent to which the existing infrastructure of the State Animal Response Team may be expanded to handle animal emergencies that involve companion animals and the feasibility and needs for such an expansion.
- (4) Survey local government to determine the total fiscal demand for a voluntary statewide program to foster the spaying and neutering of dogs and cats for the purpose of reducing the population of unwanted animals.
- (5) Review data regarding the economic impact of animal sheltering and other animal welfare programs, including the costs of such programs to counties and the State, and identify ways that the State might reduce the number of animals being sent to animal shelters and whether more cost-effective means exist to control the pet population without compromising animal welfare.
- (6) Evaluate the needs of the Animal Welfare program within the Department, specifically with regard to dealing with inquiries from the public, inspection capability and frequency, and staff development and training for Department personnel and others in the State that conduct animal welfare work.
- (7) Consult with other organizations and entities it deems appropriate.
- (8) Examine any other issues the Department deems pertinent to its charge under this subsection.

**SECTION 11.4.(l)** The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall conduct the study set out in subsection (k) of this section within funds available for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. The Department may make interim reports as it deems necessary and shall report its findings and recommendations to the Chairs of the House Agriculture Committee, the Senate Agriculture, Environment, and Natural Resources Committee, and the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Natural and Economic Resources on or before May 1, 2011.