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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

DATE

SPONSOR Romero TYPED 1/22/04 HB _____

SHORT TITLE Prohibit Certain Animal Euthanasia Practices SB 51

ANALYST Wilson

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY04	FY05	FY04	FY05		
		NFI			
		See Narrative			

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Bill 51 makes it unlawful for an employee or agent of an animal control service or facility, animal shelter or humane society to use an intracardiac injection to administer euthanasia on a conscious animal if the animal could first be rendered unconscious in a humane manner.

Significant Issues

A critical responsibility for those in the animal care and sheltering field is to provide the most humane death possible for companion animals when euthanasia is necessary. In order to be humane, every euthanasia technique must result in painless, rapid unconsciousness, followed by cardiac or respiratory arrest, and ultimately death.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) recommends the injection of sodium pentobarbital, prepared specifically for use as a euthanasia product, as the preferred agent for the euthanasia of companion animals. This method, when properly performed, has been found to be the most humane, safest, least stressful, and most professional choice by the HSUS, the American Humane Association, and the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Shelter personnel must consider many factors when choosing a method of euthanasia. The most important factor is the humaneness of the method. Other considerations include the number and types of animals handled, the number of employees available, the training available for euthanasia personnel, and legal limitations. Once an acceptable method has been chosen, shelter personnel must carefully maintain euthanasia equipment and keep an accurate inventory of euthanasia drugs to ensure both an adequate supply and the fulfillment of federal and state record-keeping requirements.

It is a binding obligation of shelter administrators to evaluate current euthanasia procedures frequently, ensure that animals are being properly handled, and verify that employees are competent, compassionate, and properly trained. Employees must be able to cope emotionally with euthanizing large numbers of animals while maintaining a concern for the well-being of each animal.

Sodium pentobarbital, injected by well-trained and caring personnel, is the preferred method for providing the most humane death for dogs and cats. Sodium pentobarbital is a Schedule II barbiturate, which means it is a federally controlled substance; it can only be purchased using a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registration and order form, and is subject to federal security and record-keeping requirements. Its use is also carefully controlled by state laws and regulations

Intravenous (IV) injection (within the vein) is considered to be the most rapid and reliable method of performing euthanasia by injection when it can be administered without causing fear or distress in the animal. Sodium pentobarbital may be administered by intraperitoneal (IP) injection (within the peritoneal cavity) to cats, kittens, and puppies if IV injections are difficult or impractical. Sedation of aggressive, fearful, wild or feral animals may be considered prior to administration of sodium pentobarbital.

Intracardiac (IC) injections (within the heart) are acceptable only for animals who are unconscious or deeply anesthetized. In addition, the following euthanasia injection routes are not acceptable: subcutaneous (under the skin), intramuscular (within the muscle), intrapulmonary (within the lung), intrarenal (within the kidney), intrasplenic (within the spleen), intrathecal (within the membranes of the spinal cord), intrathoracic (within the chest cavity), and any other nonvascular injection routes.

The methods that the HSUS consider inhumane, disapproves of, and campaigns against include decompression, nitrous oxide, drowning, decapitation, cervical dislocation, pithing, exsanguination, electrocution, gunshot (excluding properly performed field euthanasia in an emergency situation where safe, humane transport of the animal is not possible), air embolism, nitrogen flushing, strychnine, chloral hydrate, caffeine, nicotine, magnesium sulphate, potassium chloride, succinylcholine chloride, and any combination of pentobarbital with a neuromuscular blocking agent.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

If shelter personnel are properly trained, there may be a decrease in cost to the local shelters.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The bill does not identify the enforcement agency for this bill.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

Who will be charged with enforcement of the provisions of this bill?

DW/lg