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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**SPONSOR** Garcia, M.P. **ORIGINAL DATE** 2/11/07  
**LAST UPDATED** 2/19/07 **HB** HM 19  
**SHORT TITLE** Study Persistent Tethering of Dogs **SB** \_\_\_\_\_  
**ANALYST** Wilson

### ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	<b>FY07</b>	<b>FY08</b>	<b>FY09</b>	<b>3 Year Total Cost</b>	<b>Recurring or Non-Rec</b>	<b>Fund Affected</b>
<b>Total</b>		NFI	NFI		Non- recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis ( ) Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

#### Responses Received From

Board of Veterinary Medicine (BVM)

Department of Public Safety (DPS)

### SUMMARY

#### Synopsis of Bill

House Memorial 19 requests DPS to study the public safety and humane implications of persistently tethering domestic dogs.

According to the memorial the study must be completed by December 1, 2007.

### FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no fiscal impact.

### SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Tethering a dog is the practice of fastening or chaining a dog to a stationary object or ground stake as a means of keeping the dog under control.

It is in the public interest for dogs not to be vicious.

The American veterinary medical association task force on canine aggression and human-canine interactions concludes that tethering dogs contributes to aggressive behavior

The United States Department of Agriculture issued a statement on July 2, 1996 against tethering, stating in the Federal Register, "Our experience in enforcing the Animal Welfare Act has led us to conclude that continuous confinement of dogs by a tether is inhumane. A tether significantly restricts a dog's movement. A tether can also become tangled around or hooked on the dog's shelter structure or other objects, further restricting the dog's movement and potentially causing injury".

Tethered dogs account for twenty-five percent of human fatalities from dog bites.

Tethered dogs are often frustrated, frightened and easily agitated.

Tethered dogs are nearly three times more likely to attack than non-tethered dogs.

Children are the most common victims of dog attacks.

Tethered dogs kill more children annually than attacks on children from scorpions, hornets, wasps, bees, venomous snakes, lizards and spiders combined.

A conservative estimate of the annual cost for medical treatment for dog bites is dollars \$250,000,000, even though less than one-fifth of the victims of dog bites seek medical treatment.

More than 100 municipalities and four states across the United States limit or prohibit the tethering of dogs;

## **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

DPS can handle the provisions of the memorial with existing resources

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

Dogs are social beings whose greatest desire is to live with and be part of their human "pack." Endless imprisonment at the end of a chain is frustrating, boring, lonely and painful as they helplessly watch their humans' lives go on around them, from the vantage point given by their chain. By design, dogs need exercise and interaction with their world and their people, not restriction to a tiny patch of land. Dogs whose whole lives are spent on these small patches of yard may become territorial and protective with no where to exert all their pent up energy. Studies have shown that chained dogs are three times as likely to bite. Many times, it is when a small child approaches a chained dog, that the dog lashes out, either in aggression or aggressive play, and injures the child. Many of these dogs lash out because they are stressed from environmental factors as well.

Exposed to the extremes of heat and cold, many chained dogs suffer through each turning season, some without even a doghouse to escape from frigid winds or blistering sun. Once or twice a day, their human might come out and feeds them, but they never experience comfort from the elements or social interaction with their human pack. Several states have already passed laws outlawing chaining dogs as a primary means of confinement, or limiting the amount of hours per day that they may be chained.