



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 679

H.P. 448

House of Representatives, February 16, 2023

An Act Regarding Animals Abandoned by Tenants

Reference to the Committee on Judiciary suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative DODGE of Belfast.
Cosponsored by Senator LAWRENCE of York and
Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, CRAVEN of Lewiston, DOUDERA of Camden,
MADIGAN of Waterville, STOVER of Boothbay, WILLIAMS of Bar Harbor, Senator:
BEEBE-CENTER of Knox.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 14 MRSA §6013-A** is enacted to read:

3 **§6013-A. Abandoned or unclaimed animal**

4 An abandoned animal or an unclaimed animal must be cared for as provided in this
5 section.

6 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
7 following terms have the following meanings.

8 A. "Abandoned animal" means an animal that has been left behind in a rental unit by
9 a tenant who has vacated that rental unit.

10 B. "Animal" has the same meaning as in Title 7, section 3907, subsection 2.

11 C. "Unclaimed animal" means an animal belonging to a deceased or otherwise
12 incapacitated tenant that is unclaimed by another person.

13 **2. Designation of authorized person.** A landlord shall request, and a tenant keeping
14 an animal in a rental unit shall provide and routinely update, the name and contact
15 information of a person or persons the tenant authorizes to enter the tenant's rental unit to
16 retrieve the animal if the animal has become an abandoned animal or an unclaimed animal.

17 **3. Abandoned animal.** If a landlord determines an animal is abandoned, the landlord
18 shall contact the authorized person designated under subsection 2 and notify that person of
19 the need to retrieve the abandoned animal within 24 hours.

20 **4. Unclaimed animal.** If a landlord determines that a tenant keeping an animal is
21 deceased or otherwise incapacitated, the landlord shall contact the authorized person
22 designated under subsection 2 and notify that person of the need to retrieve the unclaimed
23 animal within 24 hours.

24 **5. Removal of animal.** If the authorized person designated under subsection 2 does
25 not retrieve an abandoned animal or an unclaimed animal pursuant to subsection 3 or 4, the
26 landlord shall remove the animal for placement with an animal shelter or release the animal
27 to an animal control officer or police officer within 48 hours of the notification under
28 subsection 4.

29 **SUMMARY**

30 This bill requires a tenant to designate an authorized person to retrieve an animal from
31 the tenant's rental unit in the event of the tenant's death or incapacitation or the tenant's
32 abandonment of the animal. The bill also requires the landlord to surrender the animal to
33 an animal shelter, an animal control officer or a police officer if the authorized person fails
34 to retrieve the animal.