



Federation of Maine Dog Clubs and
Responsible Dog Owners
dba NAIA Trust

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President

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To the Chairs and Members on the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry,

This bill LD1771, which eliminates the Municipal Kennel License and substitutes a State Kennel License, has many negative impacts affecting all responsible dog owners in Maine.

The proposed State Kennel License, moves family pets, hobby breeders, sled dogs, farm dogs, hunting dogs, and field trial dogs kept by their owners, into the same classification as commercial breeders. With this move come the requirements for dogs to be housed in a facility, mandating probable commercial zoning. Facilities for commercial breeders usually specify special, non-porous flooring and cleaning methods, for example. In addition, an ACO MUST inspect the kennel PRIOR to licensing each year.

The current law and proposed bill allow the Animal Welfare Department to issue a conditional license to breeding kennels, boarding kennels, and animal shelters upon application. This conditional license remains valid until the facility passes inspection, but can be revoked or suspended if minimum standards are not met within six months.

However, this proposed bill omits provisions for a conditional license for a 'Kennel License' at the state level, creating a gap in regulatory consistency for kennel operators.

Under the proposed bill, the responsibility for initiating contact for inspection falls on the kennel owner, who must reach out to the Animal Control Officer (ACO) within a limited time window. The proposed kennel license expires annually on December 31st. The owner will have to submit an application by January 31 to apply for a license (or within 30 days if a new applicant) without an option to receive a

conditional license.

In the existing Municipal Kennel License, the ACO contacts the kennel owner to setup an inspection. The current process is streamlined and reduces the risk of missed deadlines. The proposed shift to the Kennel License creates significant administrative challenges for kennel operators, especially given the short timeframe for compliance. The increased administrative burden may inadvertently penalize responsible operators who may miss the narrow application window, risking loss of licensure and the ability to operate legally.

The Animal Welfare Department has been clear that they currently do not have enough ACOs to do inspections and respond to complaints. According to their records, 438 inspections of shelters, rescues, boarding kennels, breeding kennels, and pet stores were completed in 2024. Municipal kennels are NOT included in this tally as they are done by local ACOs.

Animal Welfare has the following challenges that need to be explored:

1. Systems need to be improved so accurate data concerning rabies vaccinations can be used to pinpoint problems and facilitate solutions.
2. Lack of training, support, and certification of ACOs contributes to the low number of available ACOs.
3. The \$1 fee allotted to municipalities per dog registration does not encourage licensing and inspection of kennels by local ACOs.
4. There needs to be a mechanism to cross check rabies vaccinations to make sure all dogs are being properly maintained.

There is a lack of trained ACOs in Maine. The problem of kennel inspections is not solved by this bill. Asking an overburdened Animal Welfare Department with its current dearth of inspectors to add to their workload by changing to a different kennel classification doesn't solve any problem. In fact it creates increased hardship and expense to all affected.

I urge you to vote ONTP.

Sincerely,

Nancy Daniels
President, Maine Federation of Dog Clubs