

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 705 Emergency Sheltering of Persons with Pets

SPONSOR(S): Killebrew and others

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 752

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Oversight, Transparency & Public Management Subcommittee		Villa	Smith
2) Health Quality Subcommittee			
3) State Affairs Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The federal Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act was signed into law in 2006 and requires state and local emergency preparedness authorities to plan for how they will accommodate the needs of persons with pets and service animals prior to, during, and following a major disaster or emergency. The PETS Act also authorizes FEMA to provide rescue, care, shelter, and essential needs to persons with pets and service animals following a major disaster or emergency. Accordingly, FEMA authorizes state and local governments to seek reimbursement for pet rescue, shelter, and evacuation-support costs.

The Division of Emergency Management (DEM) addresses the sheltering of service animals and persons with pets in the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Basic Plan and the Statewide Emergency Shelter Plan (Plans). Specifically, the Plans include information on the availability of shelters that accept pets, and states that a person who uses a service animal must be allowed to bring the service animal into a shelter and be accompanied by the service animal in all areas of public accommodation. Additionally, the Plans provide that the following be taken into consideration when developing strategies for the sheltering of persons with pets:

- Locating pet-friendly shelters within buildings with restrooms, running water, and proper lighting;
- Allowing pet owners to interact with their animals and care for them; and
- Ensuring animals are properly cared for during the emergency.

The bill requires each county to designate at least one shelter that can accommodate persons with pets. The pets must be contained in secure enclosures in an area of the facility separate from the sheltering public. The designated shelter must be in compliance with safety procedures regarding the sheltering of pets established in the shelter component of the state comprehensive emergency management plan.

The bill may have an indeterminate fiscal impact on local governments. See Fiscal Comments.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Background

Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act

On October 6, 2006, the federal Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act was signed into law amending the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act).¹ The PETS Act requires state and local emergency preparedness authorities to plan for how they will accommodate the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals prior to, during, and following a major disaster or emergency when presenting their plans to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The PETS Act also authorizes FEMA to provide rescue, care, shelter, and essential needs for individuals with household pets and service animals, and to the household pets and animals themselves, following a major disaster or emergency.

FEMA's Disaster Assistance Policy

FEMA's Disaster Assistance Policy (DAP) authorizes state and local governments that receive evacuees from areas declared a major disaster or emergency to seek reimbursement for pet rescue, sheltering, and evacuation-support costs. Contractors and nonprofit organizations may be indirectly reimbursed through a state or local government provided their operations and expenses are verified.²

FEMA's DAP identifies reimbursable expenses related to state and local governments' emergency pet evacuation and sheltering activities. For household pet rescue, reimbursable expenses include overtime for regular full-time employees, regular and overtime for contract labor, and the use of owned or leased equipment. For congregated household pet sheltering, reimbursable expenses include facilities, supplies and commodities, labor, equipment, emergency veterinary services, shelter safety and security, and cleaning and restoration services.³

Additionally, FEMA's DAP provides the following definitions:

Household pet means a domesticated animal, such as a dog, cat, bird, rabbit, rodent, or turtle that is traditionally kept in the home for pleasure rather than for commercial purposes, can travel in commercial carriers, and be housed in temporary facilities. Household pets do not include reptiles (except turtles), amphibians, fish, insects and arachnids, farm animals (including horses), and animals kept for racing purposes.

Service animal means any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals with impaired hearing to intruders or sounds, providing minimal protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, or fetching dropped items.⁴

Division of Emergency Management

The Division of Emergency Management (division) is responsible for all professional, technical, and

¹ 42 U.S.C. 170b, 42 U.S.C. 5192; the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS Act) of 2006, P.L. No. 109-308, § 4, 120 Stat. 1725 (2006); and 44 CFR §§ 206.223(a), 206.225(a).

² Federal Emergency Management Agency, *FEMA Disaster Assistance Policy 9523.19*, <https://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/pa/policy.pdf> (last visited January 28, 2020).

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

administrative support functions necessary to carry out the State's Emergency Management Act.^{5,6} The division, with the assistance of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, is required to address strategies for the evacuation of persons with pets and must include similar strategies in its standards and requirements for local comprehensive emergency management plans.⁷

The State Comprehensive Emergency Management Basic Plan and the Statewide Emergency Shelter Plan (the Plans) address the sheltering of service animals and persons with pets.⁸ Specifically, the Plans include information on the availability of shelters that accept pets, and states that a person who uses a service animal must be allowed to bring the service animal into a shelter and be accompanied by the service animal in all areas of public accommodation. Additionally, the Plans provide that the following be taken into consideration when developing strategies for the sheltering of persons with pets:

- Locating pet-friendly shelters within buildings with restrooms, running water, and proper lighting;
- Allowing pet owners to interact with their animals and care for them; and
- Ensuring animals are properly cared for during the emergency.

Emergency Sheltering Facilities

Counties may initiate their own protective measures, such as ordering evacuations and activating public shelters, including pet-friendly shelters.⁹ Public facilities, including schools, postsecondary education facilities, and other facilities owned or leased by the state or local governments, which are suitable for use as public evacuation centers must be made available at the request of the local emergency management agencies.¹⁰ Agencies must coordinate with these entities to ensure that designated facilities are ready to activate prior to an emergency or disaster.¹¹ Hospitals, hospice care facilities, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes may not be designated as emergency sheltering facilities.¹²

Effect of the Bill

The bill provides that each county must designate at least one shelter that can accommodate persons with pets. The pets must be contained in secure enclosures in an area of the facility separate from the sheltering public. The shelter must be in compliance with safety procedures regarding the sheltering of pets established in the shelter component of the state comprehensive emergency management plan.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1 amends s. 252.3568, F.S., relating to emergency sheltering of persons with pets.

Section 2 provides an effective date of July 1, 2020.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

⁵ Section 14.2016(1), F.S.

⁶ Sections 252.31 – 252.63, F.S., are cited as the State Emergency Management Act. Section 252.31, F.S.

⁷ Section 252.3568, F.S.

⁸ Division of Emergency Management, *2018 Statewide Emergency Shelter Plan*,

https://www.floridadisaster.org/globalassets/dem/response/sesp/2018/2018-sesp-a1-main-plan-text_final_1-30-18.pdf (last visited January 28, 2020); Division of Emergency Management, *2014 State of Florida Comprehensive Emergency Management Basic Plan*, <https://www.floridadisaster.org/globalassets/importedpdfs/2014-state-cemp-basic-plan.pdf> (last visited January 29, 2020).

⁹ Division of Emergency Management, *2014 State of Florida Comprehensive Emergency Management Basic Plan*, *supra* note 8.

¹⁰ Section 252.385(4)(a), F.S.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

See Fiscal Comments.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The bill may have an indeterminate negative fiscal impact on counties to designate at least one shelter that can accommodate persons with pets. The bill provides that pets must be contained in secure enclosures in an area of the facility separate from the sheltering public, and the shelter must be in compliance with safety procedures regarding the sheltering of pets established in the shelter component of the state comprehensive emergency management plan. The costs associated with designating appropriate facilities and containing pets is indeterminate as each county would be responsible for determining their own standards.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The county/municipality mandates provision of Art. VII, section 18, of the Florida Constitution may apply because this bill may require counties to expend funds in order to designate shelters that can accommodate persons with pets and ensure the pets are contained in secure enclosures separate from the sheltering public. However, an exemption may apply due to an insignificant fiscal cost.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The bill does not confer rulemaking authority.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

Not Applicable.