

PROTECTING ANIMALS AND PEOPLE THROUGH CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Support the Minnesota Office of Animal Protection (MN OAP):
S.F. 3542 (Marty) / H.F. 3799 (Norris)

ANIMAL CRUELTY IS A PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUE

The ongoing occurrence of animal cruelty throughout Minnesota is well-documented. This crime is also linked to human violence, such as domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, sexual abuse, and other crimes against people and property.

To protect public safety and welfare, the Minnesota Office of Animal Protection, to be under the MN Department of Public Safety, will provide expertise and resources to assist local, state, Tribal, and federal agencies in the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of animal cruelty.



STATEMENT OF NEED

The Minnesota Office of Animal Protection will address multiple needs:



- **Expertise.** Animal cruelty requires a multi-disciplinary approach with specialized expertise. The OAP will provide leadership and collaboration across multiple professions, including investigations, prosecution, veterinary forensics, animal care, and human welfare.



- **Accountability.** Various entities in Minnesota are allowed to investigate cruelty against animals, and yet there is no oversight or support for authorities tasked with these duties. The OAP will provide consistency and accountability through development of uniform protocols.



- **Cross-discipline training.** Inconsistency in the enforcement of animal cruelty laws is also due to lack of training. The OAP will provide training in animal cruelty and Minnesota law across different disciplines, building knowledge and standards.



- **Resources.** Animal cruelty cases may not be pursued or animals not seized due to a lack of qualified services or a high cost of care. Local and national nonprofits often assume the cost. The OAP will work to build funds to help communities in the care of seized animals.



- **Issues.** Providing measurable outcomes for the protection of animals and people requires a hard look at multiple issues. The OAP can lead discussion and recommendations on related topics, such as animal cruelty reporting, crime data, victim services, and prevention measures.

MINNESOTA OFFICE OF ANIMAL PROTECTION BILL

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THE OFFICE

- Establish the Minnesota Office of Animal Protection under the Minnesota Department of Public Safety
- Scope is criminal law and applies to all animals, as defined in Minn. Statutes Chapter 343

LEADERSHIP & OVERSIGHT

- Establish Advisory Committee with subject experts to provide guidance to staff
- Hire Director with authority to hire additional staff to execute duties

STATEWIDE EXPERTISE & ASSISTANCE

- Provide expertise in disciplines related to animal cruelty and law, including investigations, prosecution, veterinary forensics, animal care, and human welfare
- Assist local, state, Tribal, and federal authorities in the enforcement of animal cruelty laws
- Educate authorities about the link between animal and human violence; animal cruelty can often be the “foot in the door”

DUTIES & SERVICES

- Identify and define community needs and challenges pertaining to animal cruelty
- Develop uniform protocols and standards in the enforcement of animal cruelty laws to be used statewide
- Develop cross-discipline training and certification in the field of animal law and the crime of animal cruelty
- Educate the public in the humane treatment of animals and reporting of suspected animal cruelty
- Collect and maintain statewide crime data and cruelty cases for analysis and recommendations
- Build funds and grant program to assist local communities in enforcement efforts and cost of care for animals

