

Amendment to HB 1128

1 Amend the title of the bill by replacing it with the following:

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3 AN ACT restricting the use of weather modification technologies to declared emergencies and
4 relative to cruelty to livestock.

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6 Amend the bill by replacing all after section 1 with the following:

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8 2 Cruelty to Animals. Amend RSA 644:8, IV(a)(1) to read as follows:

9 IV.(a)(1) Any person charged with animal cruelty under paragraphs III or III-a may have his
10 or her animals, **except for livestock**, confiscated by the arresting officer. **The confiscation of**
11 **livestock shall be governed by paragraph IV-b.**

12 3 Cruelty to Animals. Amend RSA 644:8, IV-a(a) to read as follows:

13 IV-a.(a) Except as provided in subparagraphs (b) and (c) any appropriate law enforcement
14 officer, animal control officer, or officer of a duly licensed humane society may take into temporary
15 protective custody any animal, **except for livestock, which shall be governed by paragraph IV-**
16 **b**, when there is probable cause to believe that it has been or is being abused or neglected in
17 violation of paragraphs III or III-a when there is a clear and imminent danger to the animal's health
18 or life and there is not sufficient time to obtain a court order. Such officer shall leave a written
19 notice indicating the type and number of animals taken into protective custody, the name of the
20 officer, the time and date taken, the reason it was taken, the procedure to have the animal returned
21 and any other relevant information. Such notice shall be left at the location where the animal was
22 taken into custody. The officer shall provide for proper care and housing of any animal taken into
23 protective custody under this paragraph. If, after 7 days, the animal has not been returned or
24 claimed, the officer shall petition the municipal or district court seeking either permanent custody or
25 a one-week extension of custody or shall file charges under this section. If a week's extension is
26 granted by the court and after a period of 14 days the animal remains unclaimed, the title and
27 custody of the animal shall rest with the officer on behalf of the officer's department or society. The
28 department or society may dispose of the animal in any lawful and humane manner as if it were the
29 rightful owner. If after 14 days the officer or the officer's department determines that charges
30 should be filed under this section, the officer shall petition the court.

31 4 New Paragraphs; Cruelty to Animals; Livestock. Amend RSA 644:8 by inserting after
32 paragraph IV-a the following new paragraphs:

Amendment to HB 1128

- Page 2 -

1 IV-b.(a) Any person charged with cruelty to animals under RSA 644:8 paragraphs III or III-a
2 concerning livestock may have his or her livestock confiscated by the arresting officer. No animal
3 shall be confiscated unless a person is charged under this section, except when there is probable
4 cause to believe the livestock's life is in imminent danger. The investigating officer for a case
5 involving livestock as defined in RSA 427:38, III shall be accompanied by the state veterinarian or
6 designee, to include New Hampshire department of agriculture, markets, and food staff, or a
7 licensed veterinarian, or other qualified staff from an animal shelter facility approved by the state
8 veterinarian, in person or by video who shall determine whether there is probable cause to believe
9 that the livestock should be confiscated. Livestock confiscated without a warrant where a charge
10 has not been filed shall be returned within 10 days.

11 (b) The department of justice shall develop a form to be distributed to any person
12 charged with cruelty to animals under RSA 644:8, paragraphs III or III-a, concerning livestock. The
13 form shall inform the person of their right to have the confiscated livestock examined by a
14 veterinarian licensed under RSA 332-B, chosen by the person charged, at the person's expense.

15 (c) Courts shall give cases in which livestock have been confiscated by an arresting
16 officer priority on the court calendar, as outlined in RSA 644:8, IV(a)(3).

17 (d) Any person with proof of sole ownership or co-ownership of the livestock confiscated
18 by an arresting officer in a livestock cruelty case and who is not a defendant or party of interest in
19 the criminal case may petition the court for temporary custody of the livestock. The court shall give
20 such person priority for temporary custody of the livestock if the court determines it is in the best
21 interest of the livestock's health, safety, and wellbeing.

22 (e) No custodian of the livestock confiscated under this section shall spay or neuter or
23 otherwise permanently alter the confiscated livestock in his or her custody pending final disposition
24 of the court case unless a treating veterinarian deems such procedure necessary to save the life of
25 the livestock or the owner of the livestock agrees in writing to the procedure or treatment. If the
26 treating veterinarian believes that livestock which has been confiscated is in a state of suffering and
27 that the cost to alleviate the suffering will exceed the amount of allowable reimbursement as set by
28 Agr 3504.01(c)(8), unless the owner pays for the care, the animal shall be euthanized.

29 (f) Upon a person's conviction of cruelty to animals regarding livestock, the court shall
30 dispose of the confiscated livestock in any manner it decides except in a case in which the confiscated
31 livestock is owned or co-owned by persons other than the defendant. If the defendant does not have
32 an ownership interest in the confiscated livestock, the court shall give priority to restoring full
33 ownership rights to any person with proof of ownership if the court determines that such is in the
34 best interest of the livestock's health, safety, and wellbeing. If the confiscated livestock is co-owned
35 by the defendant, the court shall give priority to transferring the defendant's interest in the property
36 to the remaining owner or co-owners equitably if the court determines that such is in the best
37 interest of the livestock's health, safety, and wellbeing.

Amendment to HB 1128

- Page 3 -

1 (g) The costs to provide the confiscated livestock with humane care and adequate and
2 necessary veterinary services, if any, incurred in boarding and treating the livestock, pending
3 disposition of the case, and in disposing of the livestock upon a conviction of said person for cruelty
4 to animals regarding livestock, shall be borne by the person so convicted in accordance with rules
5 adopted by the department of agriculture, markets, and food.

6 (h) Any donations raised using the stories or likenesses of the animals in protective
7 custody shall be used to offset the cost of care of such animals.

8 IV-c.(a) Except as provided in RSA 644:8, IV(b), any appropriate law enforcement officer or
9 municipal animal control officer may take into temporary protective custody any livestock when the
10 owner or caretaker is not present and there is probable cause to believe that it has been or is being
11 abused or neglected in violation of paragraphs III or III-a when there is a clear and imminent danger
12 to the livestock's health or life and there is not sufficient time to obtain a court order. Such officer
13 shall leave a written notice indicating the type and number of livestock taken into protective
14 custody, the name of the officer, the time and date taken, the reason it was taken, the procedure to
15 have the livestock returned and any other relevant information. Such notice shall be left at the
16 location where the livestock was taken into custody. The officer shall provide for proper care and
17 housing of any livestock taken into protective custody under this paragraph. For any livestock
18 confiscated without a warrant where a charge has not been filed, the confiscated livestock shall be
19 returned within 10 days. If, after 10 days, the livestock has not been returned or claimed, the officer
20 shall petition the municipal or district court seeking either permanent custody or a one-week
21 extension of custody or shall file charges under this section. If a week's extension is granted by the
22 court and after a period of 14 days the livestock remains unclaimed, the title and custody of the
23 livestock shall rest with the officer on behalf of the officer's department. The department may
24 dispose of the livestock in any lawful and humane manner as if it were the rightful owner. If after
25 14 days the officer or the officer's department determines that charges should be filed under this
26 section, the officer shall petition the court. An owner of livestock taken into protective custody shall
27 have the right as referenced in subparagraph IV(b).

28 (b) For purposes of subparagraph (a) the investigating officer for livestock, as defined
29 RSA 427:38, III, shall be accompanied by the state veterinarian or their designee in person or by
30 video who shall set the probable cause criteria for taking the livestock.

31 (c) In cases where one or more lactating livestock is confiscated, proof shall be provided
32 by the confiscating party to the attending veterinarian and the owner or caretaker that proper care
33 and facilities shall be provided for adults and offspring. No lactating livestock shall be separated
34 from its non-weaned offspring unless such separation is authorized by a licensed veterinarian.

35 (d) No person, other than the state veterinarian or their designee, or an employee of a
36 government agency with jurisdiction to investigate violations of this section, and which is conducting
37 an investigation under this section, may take part during any investigation into a complaint

Amendment to HB 1128

- Page 4 -

1 conducted pursuant to this section. No person who may be called upon to take custody of any
2 livestock seized as a result of a complaint under this section may participate in the decision to seize
3 any livestock. The act of making or forwarding a complaint does not make a person part of an
4 investigation and does not render that person ineligible to take animals into custody.

5 (e) In order to protect the integrity of complaint investigations an appropriate law
6 enforcement officer shall require any person or their designated agent called upon to take custody of
7 any livestock seized or to assist during any complaint investigation, to sign a binding nondisclosure
8 agreement intended to protect any shared or confidential information against unauthorized use
9 pending final adjudication or dismissal of such complaint; provided that information may be
10 disclosed only to officials with a need to know who are subject to confidentiality obligations.

11 (f) No custodian of livestock in temporary protective custody under this section shall
12 spay or neuter or otherwise permanently alter the confiscated livestock in his or her custody pending
13 final disposition of the court case unless a treating veterinarian deems such procedure necessary to
14 save the life of the livestock or the owner of the livestock agrees in writing to the procedure or
15 treatment. If the treating veterinarian believes that livestock which has been confiscated is in a
16 state of suffering and that the cost to alleviate the suffering will exceed the amount of allowable
17 reimbursement as set by Agr 3504.01(c)(8), unless the owner pays for the care or surrenders the
18 animal outright or for care by an animal shelter facility, the animal shall be euthanized.

19 5 Veterinarian Assistant. Amend RSA 644:8, V to read as follows:

20 V. A veterinarian licensed to practice in the state ***and the state veterinarian or their***
21 ***designee*** shall be held harmless from either criminal or civil liability for any decisions made for
22 services rendered under the provisions of this section or RSA 435:11-16. Such a veterinarian ***or***
23 ***designee*** is, therefore, under this paragraph, protected from a lawsuit for his ***or her*** part in an
24 investigation of cruelty to animals.

25 6 State Veterinarian; Powers. Amend RSA 436:8 to read as follows:

26 436:8 Powers. The state veterinarian, under the direction of the commissioner, shall have all of
27 the powers of the commissioner and shall have general charge of the enforcement of this chapter.
28 Complaints under RSA 644:8, 644:8-a, 644:8-aa and any other law pertaining to the abuse of
29 domestic animals, as defined under RSA 436:1, shall initially be filed with the local law enforcement
30 agency, animal control officer, state police, or sheriff which has jurisdiction over where the animal is
31 located or kept. At the request of the local law enforcement agency, animal control officer, state
32 police, or sheriff, the state veterinarian shall assist in a secondary capacity in enforcing the
33 provisions of and investigating said complaints. ~~[In the event the commissioner becomes~~
34 ~~incapacitated or a vacancy occurs in the office, the state veterinarian shall perform all the duties of~~
35 ~~that office during any such incapacity or until any such vacancy is filled. The commissioner may~~
36 ~~direct the state veterinarian to act for him or her in an official capacity whenever he or she may be~~
37 ~~absent from his or her duties.]~~

Amendment to HB 1128

- Page 5 -

1 7 Repeal. RSA 644:8, IV-a(b), relative to livestock confiscation, is repealed.

2 8 Effective Date.

3 I. Section 1 shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

4 II. The remainder of this act shall take effect January 1, 2027.

Amendment to HB 1128
- Page 6 -

2026-1839s

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill:

- I. Specifies the circumstances and conditions under which cloud seeding may occur.
- II. Provides procedures for the potential confiscation of livestock involved in cruelty to animal cases.