

SB 619-FN - VERSION ADOPTED BY BOTH BODIES

03/05/2026 0848s
23Apr2026... 1347h

2026 SESSION

26-2164
08/06

SENATE BILL **619-FN**

AN ACT establishing procedures for expedited court hearings and disposition of confiscated animals.

SPONSORS: Sen. Abbas, Dist 22; Sen. Avard, Dist 12; Sen. Sullivan, Dist 18; Sen. McGough, Dist 11; Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Sen. Murphy, Dist 16; Sen. Innis, Dist 7; Sen. Birdsell, Dist 19; Rep. Alexander Jr., Hills. 29; Rep. C. Harvey, Ches. 6

COMMITTEE: Judiciary

ANALYSIS

This bill establishes procedures for expedited court hearings and disposition of animals confiscated due to allegations of animal cruelty.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT establishing procedures for expedited court hearings and disposition of confiscated animals.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Cruelty to Animals; Court Hearing Upon Confiscation of Animals. Amend RSA 644:8, IV(a)(3)
2 to read as follows:

3 (3) Courts shall give cases in which animals have been confiscated by an arresting
4 officer priority on the court calendar. In cases in which animals have been confiscated by an
5 arresting officer or his or her agency, a status hearing shall be held by the court within 14 days of
6 the confiscation of the animals.

7 ***(A) A purpose of the hearing shall be to determine whether the***
8 ***confiscation of the animal or animals was lawful in accordance with paragraph IV-a.***
9 ***Upon such a showing, the court may make a determination of temporary custody that is in***
10 ***the best interest of the animal's health, safety, and wellbeing. If the confiscated animal is***
11 ***co-owned by the defendant, the court may transfer the custody of the animal to the***
12 ***remaining owner or co-owners equitably if the court determines that such is in the best***
13 ***interest of the animal's health, safety, and wellbeing. The court may also address any***
14 ***other matters before it as raised by either party or if it is in the interests of justice. Upon***
15 ***request from either party or by order of the court, this hearing may include the defendant's***
16 ***arraignment. Waiver of the arraignment by the defendant shall not waive the 14 day***
17 ***hearing set forth in this paragraph.***

18 ***(B) If the accused fails to appear in court without giving prior notice***
19 ***within 3 days of the hearing date, or, if less than 3 days notice, without evidence of***
20 ***emergent circumstances, the hearing shall take place as scheduled and the court may rule***
21 ***on any matters before it.***

22 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect January 1, 2027.

LBA
26-2164
04/29/2026

SB 619-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE (AMENDMENT # 2026-1347h)

AN ACT establishing procedures for expedited court hearings and disposition of confiscated animals.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Legislative Budget Assistant has determined that this legislation has a total fiscal impact of less than \$10,000 in each of the fiscal years 2027 through 2029.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Judicial Branch