

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Joshua Schauer 271-3077

HB 1153-FN-LOCAL, establishing a committee to study New Hampshire statutes relative to cats and dogs.

Hearing Date: March 19, 2026

Time Opened: 9:25 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:34 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Avard, McConkey, Watters and Rosenwald

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Pearl

Bill Analysis: This bill establishes a committee to study New Hampshire statutes relative to cats and dogs.

Sponsors:

Rep. Bixby

Rep. N. Germana

Who supports the bill: Representative Peter Bixby (Straf. 13), Kurt Ehrenburg (Humane World)

Summary of testimony presented:

Representative Peter Bixby, Strafford 13

- Representative Bixby introduced the bill as the prime sponsor, noting that its purpose was to review the work of a past committee that had not been active for many years.
- He explained that the bill aimed to provide a formal review of past practices and to identify areas where the legislative framework had become outdated or unclear.
- Bixby shared a story from when it was heard in the House. He said they had previously failed to notice a municipal payment of 0.25 cents, which led to follow-up actions by the relevant department, and subsequent adjustments made by the Senate. He explained that the previous version of the bill had failed because it was amended to add a fee, and no hearing was held, causing the bill to die without further consideration.

- Representative Bixby expressed concern that existing legislation on the issue was confusing and insufficiently clear, which created challenges for municipalities and other stakeholders.
- He emphasized that establishing a study committee was essential to gather information, clarify ambiguous provisions, identify outdated rules, and provide guidance for improving the legislative framework.

Senator Rosenwald asked why ferrets were not mentioned in the bill and questioned why they were excluded from its provisions.

Representative Bixby said the title of the statute is cats and dogs, but he is not opposed to adding ferrets to the issue.

Senator Rosenwald asked about line 16 of the bill and specifically questioned the quorum requirement. She sought clarification on how many members would be needed to constitute a quorum for the committee's work.

Representative Bixby said it was a mistake and needs to be changed to 3 members.

Kurt Ehrenbrug, Humane World

- He spoke in support of the bill, noting that these laws needed attention and that there was significant room for improvement. He emphasized that the legislation should perhaps cover more than just cats and dogs.

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Date Hearing Report completed: March 20, 2026