

SB 619-FN - AS INTRODUCED

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. Avar, 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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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) The scope of the hearing shall be limited to whether the impounding***
8 ***of the animal or animals was authorized. Upon such a showing, the court may require the***
9 ***defendant or appellant to post a bond or other security in an amount not exceeding \$1,000***
10 ***for each animal in custody or make a determination of disposition that is in the best***
11 ***interest of the animal's health, safety, and wellbeing. If the confiscated animal is co-owned***
12 ***by the defendant, the court may transfer the defendant's interest in the property to the***
13 ***remaining owner or co-owners equitably if the court determines that such is in the best***
14 ***interest of the animal's health, safety, and wellbeing.***

15 ***(B) Such bond or security shall be posted to the court within 30 days. If***
16 ***such bond or security is not paid within 30 days after the court orders the bond or security***
17 ***to be posted, the animals shall be forfeited to the arresting officer, the arresting officer's***
18 ***agency, or the arresting officer's agency's designee. The court may, for good cause, extend***
19 ***the deadline by no more than 15 days. A court shall order the return of any bond or***
20 ***security upon a court approved agreement of the parties or a finding of not guilty.***

21 ***(C) Neither the result of a hearing provided for under this paragraph***
22 ***nor a statement of an owner made at any such hearing shall be admissible in any criminal***
23 ***prosecution related to the impoundment of the animal or animals.***

24 ***(D) Failure of the owner to appear in court without prior notice, or***
25 ***without proof of emergent circumstances within 3 days shall not prevent the court from***
26 ***conducting the hearing or making a determination.***

27 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect January 1, 2027.

LBA
26-2164
10/27/25

**SB 619-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS INTRODUCED**

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