

February 16, 2026

The Honorable Judy Aron, Chair  
The Honorable Liz Barbour, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Environment and Agriculture  
New Hampshire House of Representatives  
Concord, NH

**Subject: House Bill 1488 – Relative to Rabies Vaccines for Animals – Recommend Inexpedient to Legislate**

Chair Aron, Vice Chair Barbour & Members of the House Committee on Environment and Agriculture,

I write on behalf of the Animal Health Institute (AHI) in strong opposition to HB 1488 and respectfully urge an Inexpedient to Legislate report. AHI is the U.S. trade association for research-based manufacturers of animal health products – the medicines that keep pets, service animals, and livestock healthy.

HB 1488 would make New Hampshire the first and only state to substitute a titer test for rabies vaccination requirement for dogs, cats, and ferrets, this despite rabies still being very present in the state. Between 2022 and 2025, the number of rabies cases in the state fluctuated between 28-40, with some rabid animals attacking humans. Although a rabies antibody titer has been correlated with prior vaccination, it has not been generally correlated with future protective immunity or an adequate immune response in dogs.

The immunization of animals has been carried out for centuries and serves as the most cost-effective and trusted method of preventing or reducing infectious veterinary diseases. The use of USDA-approved vaccines in both farm and companion animals has not only improved animal welfare but made contributions to public health by making the food supply safer and more secure and by allowing pets to move from the backyard into the home.

Rabies is a great example. Once a near-certain death sentence, rabies is now one of the most preventable infectious diseases because of immunization. Indeed, on September 7, 2007, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control declared the United States canine-rabies free, mostly because of longstanding mandatory pet vaccination requirements. This doesn't mean the job is done, however, since rabies still circulate in various wildlife populations, underscoring the importance of maintaining immunization status in companion animals. Indeed, the ongoing rabies cases in New Hampshire in raccoons, skunks, foxes, bats, fishers, otters, and other wildlife perfectly illustrate this.

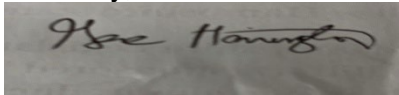
Under current New Hampshire law, every dog, cat, and ferret three months of age shall be vaccinated against rabies. Unvaccinated dogs, cats, and ferrets acquired or moved into the state shall be vaccinated within 30 days after purchase or arrival, unless under three months of age. Every dog, cat, and ferret shall be revaccinated between nine and 12 months after the initial vaccination and subsequently receive booster vaccines as outlined in the most current National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians' Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control.

An exemption to the rabies immunization requirement may be issued, where illness or a veterinary medical condition warrants, by the local rabies control authority upon the written recommendation of a licensed veterinarian. The recommendation shall also be signed by an American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine diplomate and the state veterinarian. The exemption shall be valid for one year. After the initial one year has expired and if the animal still qualifies for the exemption, the exemption shall be recertified by a licensed veterinarian on an annual basis.

The exempted animal shall be maintained in strict rabies isolation, under conditions that are at the discretion of the local rabies control authority, until such time as the medical condition has been resolved and the animal can be immunized against rabies. Exempted animals shall not be allowed outdoors without being on a leash and shall be under the direct physical control of an adult owner at all times. In addition, when the animal is outdoors, it shall be muzzled in a manner approved by the local rabies control authority. Under HB 1488, the animal that is granted an exemption via titer testing is not subject to the isolation, leashing or muzzling requirements, which increases the risk of exposure to rabies.

HB 1488 significantly weakens New Hampshire rabies immunization law and should be reported as Inexpedient to Legislate. I appreciate your time and consideration and urge you to contact me at [gharrington@ahi.org](mailto:gharrington@ahi.org) or (202) 549-5934 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A rectangular area containing a handwritten signature in dark ink, which appears to read "Gene Harrington".

Gene Harrington  
Senior Director, State Affairs  
Animal Health Institute