

## Memorandum in Support

### COMMITTEE ON ANIMALS AND THE LAW

Animals #10

May 26, 2017

S. 3221

By: Senator Golden

A. 2672

By: M. of A. Malliotakis

Senate Committee: Agriculture

Assembly Committee: Agriculture

Effective Date: 90<sup>th</sup> day after it shall  
have become a law

**AN ACT** to amend the agriculture and markets law, in relation to requiring reasonable efforts be made in determining the owners of certain animals.

**LAWS & SECTIONS REFERRED TO:** Subdivision 7-a of section 117 and subdivision 2 of section 374 of the Agriculture and Markets Law.

### **THE COMMITTEE ON ANIMALS AND THE LAW** **SUPPORTS THIS LEGISLATION**

This bill would amend the Agriculture and Markets Law to require pounds and shelters to make reasonable efforts including the use of social media and the Internet to locate owners of lost animals before allowing adoption or euthanizing the animals. We urge the Legislature to pass this important and necessary bill into law to promote meaningful opportunities for pets to be reunited with their families before irreversible further steps are taken.

Pets live in more than 50% of American homes. Findings of the First National Lost Pet Survey conducted by the ASPCA revealed that 15% of pet guardians reported a lost dog or cat in the past five years. Percentages of lost dogs and lost cats were nearly identical; however, dogs were more likely than cats to be safely returned to their homes. Only 6% of dog owners and only 2% of cat owners found their lost pets at shelters. This legislation will allow pounds and shelters the opportunity to do better in reuniting lost pets turned in to shelters with their owners.

Specifically, this legislation amends existing law to provide that any animal in the custody of a pound or shelter must, after the applicable owner redemption period, make the animal available for adoption. The existing applicable owner redemption period varies, depending on locality, but may be as short as a minimum of three days under current law; this bill would extend that minimum period to five days, although it may be longer.

After the owner redemption period expires, this legislation would further amend existing law to provide that a reasonable period for the pound or shelter to hold the animal for adoption is at least 90 days. During the adoption period, the pound or shelter in possession of the animal is required to make reasonable efforts to find the animal's owner or to provide fostering or adoptive owners for the animal for a reasonable practicable period. The reasonable efforts shall include checking the animal for all forms of identification (such as microchips), the use of social media, or placing a photograph and description of the animal on the Internet. A reasonably practicable period is determined based upon the shelter or pound's size, the number of animals housed in the shelter or pound, and the animal's overall health.

By requiring these simple efforts, the likelihood of returning lost pets to their homes will greatly increased. If rightful owners cannot be located, these simple efforts will increase adoption rates before the drastic, irreversible step of euthanasia.

For the foregoing reasons, the Committee on Animals and the Law **SUPPORTS** the passage and enactment of this legislation.