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Bill Summaries: Animal Protections

SB 573 - Dogs and cats: microchip implants

This new law requires a public animal control agency or shelter to microchip a dog or cat with current information before releasing the animal to an owner seeking to reclaim it. It also requires a public animal control agency or shelter to microchip a dog or cat before adopting out, selling, or giving away the animal to a new owner.

The law is subject to some exceptions. If the agency, shelter, or group does not have microchipping capabilities on location, the bill requires the agency, shelter, or group to make a good faith effort to locate available free or discounted regional microchipping services and provide that information to the owner or new owner. The bill also exempts from these microchipping requirements a dog or cat that is medically unfit for a microchipping procedure, or a dog or cat reclaimed or received by an owner who signs a form stating that the cost of microchipping would impose an economic hardship for the owner. An agency, shelter, or group that violates this section on or after January 1, 2022, is subject to a civil penalty of \$100.00. This law shall go into effect on January 1, 2021.

AB 2152 - Prohibition on the retail sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits

AB 2152 prohibits a pet store operator from selling live dogs, cats, or rabbits in a pet store while authorizing a pet store to work with animal rescue groups and shelters for adoption events. Also known as “Bella’s Act,” this new law prevents pet store operators from receiving compensation from pet adoptions or for the use of the store and its resources in connection with adoption events. Within the Act, “animal rescue group” is defined as a 501(c)(3) non-profit group that meets the following requirements: (1) does not breed animals and (2) does not obtain animals in exchange for compensation from any person that breeds or brokers animals. A public animal control agency or shelter is “...any facility operated by or under contract with any governmental entity for the purpose of impounding or harboring seized, stray, homeless, abandoned, or unwanted dogs, cats, rabbits, or other animals.”

This new law also requires any animal displayed for adoption to be sterilized and adoptable for a total fee not to exceed \$500.00. Violations are punished by civil penalty of up to \$5,000.00. Most

importantly, AB 2152 does not prohibit a local agency from adopting requirements that are more protective than those set forth in this new law. AB 2152 shall go into effect on January 1, 2021.