



Legislation Text

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A MOTION requesting the county executive to transmit a report on opportunities to improve enforcement of animal cruelty laws in King County.

WHEREAS, many animals are much loved and cared for members of King County families, and

WHEREAS, animals are vulnerable to abuse and neglect and must be protected, and

WHEREAS, the state of Washington granted law enforcement and animal control agencies the power to enforce animal cruelty laws with RCW 16.52.015, and

WHEREAS, King County authorized the manager of the animal control authority and his or her authorized animal control officers to enforce animal cruelty laws with K.C.C. 11.04.170, and

WHEREAS, it is unlawful to be cruel to animals in King County, under K.C.C. 11.04.250, and

WHEREAS, on April 11, 2006, the labor, operations and technology committee was briefed on the enforcement of King County animal cruelty laws, and

WHEREAS, the number of telephone calls received by King County animal control reporting alleged animal cruelty increased from eight-hundred and fifteen calls in 2004 to one thousand and two call in 2005, representing a twenty-three percent increase, and

WHEREAS, in 2006 there have been several serious animal cruelty cases reported that resulted in the deaths of family pets in King County, and

WHEREAS, animal cruelty investigations are complex and require specialized skills, and

WHEREAS, several King County animal control officers investigate animal cruelty investigation in addition to their other duties;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

The county executive is requested to file with the clerk of the council by July 1, 2006, twelve copies of a report, for distribution to all councilmembers and the lead staff of the labor, operations and technology committee, or its successor, on the following:

A. Make recommendations on how to improve the county's efforts to reduce and eliminate animal cruelty, the investigations of animal cruelty allegations and coordination of resources among animal control and law enforcement;

B. Evaluate alternative organizational models for the enforcement of animal cruelty laws and make a recommendation on how King County animal control should be organized for animal cruelty. The evaluation shall include an analysis on the feasibility of designating responsibilities to one or two animal control officers for enforcement of King County animal cruelty laws enforcement. The evaluation shall also include an analysis of how other jurisdictions, including the cities of Houston, San Diego and Detroit, are organized for the enforcement of animal cruelty laws and whether King County should be organized in a similar manner; and

C. Improve animal control section policies and procedures for:

1. Coordination of animal cruelty enforcement between animal control officers and law enforcement officers;
2. Tracking and following-up on animal cruelty cases, particularly repeat offenders; and
3. Accepting reports of alleged animal cruelty cases from private humane societies.

none