

11684

I N A S S E M B L Y

August 4, 2010

Introduced by COMMITTEE ON RULES -- (at request of M. of A. Zebrowski)  
-- read once and referred to the Committee on Agriculture

AN ACT to amend the agriculture and markets law, in relation to  
restricting the performance of surgical devocalization procedures on  
dogs and cats

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEM-  
BLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

- 1 Section 1. The agriculture and markets law is amended by adding a new  
2 section 365-a to read as follows:  
3 S 365-A. DEVOCALIZATION OF ANIMALS. 1. NO PERSON SHALL PERFORM THE  
4 SURGICAL DEVOCALIZATION OF A DOG OR CAT EXCEPT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE  
5 PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION.  
6 2. A. SURGICAL DEVOCALIZATION OF A DOG OR CAT SHALL BE PERFORMED ONLY  
7 BY A PERSON LICENSED AS A VETERINARIAN IN THIS STATE UNDER THE  
8 PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FIVE OF THE EDUCATION LAW.  
9 B. SURGICAL DEVOCALIZATION OF A DOG OR CAT MAY BE PERFORMED ONLY WHEN  
10 THE PROCEDURE IS MEDICALLY NECESSARY TO TREAT OR RELIEVE AN ILLNESS,  
11 DISEASE OR INJURY OR CORRECT A CONGENITAL ABNORMALITY SUFFERED BY THE  
12 ANIMAL, WHICH ILLNESS, DISEASE, INJURY OR CONGENITAL ABNORMALITY IS  
13 CAUSING OR MAY CAUSE THE ANIMAL PHYSICAL PAIN OR HARM.  
14 3. A. ANY PERSON WHO PERFORMS A SURGICAL DEVOCALIZATION PROCEDURE ON A  
15 DOG OR CAT SHALL PREPARE A RECORD OF THE PROCEDURE CONTAINING THE  
16 FOLLOWING INFORMATION:  
17 (1) THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE ANIMAL'S OWNER;  
18 (2) THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE PERSON FROM WHOM PAYMENT IS RECEIVED  
19 FOR THE PROCEDURE;  
20 (3) A DESCRIPTION OF THE ANIMAL, INCLUDING ITS NAME, SPECIES, BREED,  
21 DATE OF BIRTH, SEX, COLOR, MARKINGS AND CURRENT WEIGHT;  
22 (4) THE LICENSE NUMBER AND MUNICIPALITY THAT ISSUED THE LICENSE FOR  
23 THE ANIMAL;  
24 (5) THE DATE AND TIME OF THE PROCEDURE;  
25 (6) THE REASON THE PROCEDURE WAS PERFORMED; AND  
26 (7) ANY DIAGNOSTIC OPINION, ANALYSIS OR TEST RESULTS TO SUPPORT THE  
27 DIAGNOSIS.

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[ ] is old law to be omitted.

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1 B. PRIOR TO PERFORMING A SURGICAL DEVOCALIZATION PROCEDURE ON A DOG OR  
2 CAT, THE PERSON PERFORMING THE PROCEDURE SHALL FILE WITH THE CLERK OF  
3 THE MUNICIPALITY IN WHICH THE SURGERY IS TO BE PERFORMED A COPY OF THE  
4 RECORD SPECIFIED IN PARAGRAPH A OF THIS SUBDIVISION, TOGETHER WITH A  
5 WRITTEN STATEMENT DECLARING THAT THE PROCEDURE IS MEDICALLY NECESSARY TO  
6 PROTECT THE HEALTH OR WELLBEING OF THE DOG OR CAT.

7 C. THE RECORD REQUIRED BY PARAGRAPH A OF THIS SUBDIVISION SHALL BE  
8 RETAINED BY THE PERSON PERFORMING THE PROCEDURE FOR A PERIOD OF FOUR  
9 YEARS AFTER THE LAST CONTACT WITH THE ANIMAL ON WHICH THE PROCEDURE WAS  
10 PERFORMED. ALL SUCH RECORDS SHALL BE SUBJECT TO AUDIT BY THE STATE BOARD  
11 FOR VETERINARY MEDICINE.

12 D. ANY PERSON WHO PERFORMS A DEVOCALIZATION PROCEDURE ON A DOG OR CAT  
13 SHALL REPORT THE NUMBER OF ALL SUCH PROCEDURES TO THE STATE BOARD FOR  
14 VETERINARY MEDICINE ANNUALLY ON OR BEFORE MARCH THIRTIETH. THE BOARD  
15 SHALL MAINTAIN ALL NOTICES RECEIVED UNDER THIS SUBDIVISION FOR FOUR  
16 YEARS FROM THE DATE OF RECEIPT.

17 E. ANY PERSON WHO PERFORMS A SURGICAL DEVOCALIZATION PROCEDURE ON A  
18 DOG OR CAT SHALL PREPARE AND PROVIDE TO THE ANIMAL'S OWNER A WRITTEN  
19 NOTICE THAT SUCH PROCEDURE HAS BEEN CONDUCTED ON THE ANIMAL IN ACCORD-  
20 ANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION AND CONTAINING THE INFORMATION  
21 SPECIFIED IN SUBPARAGRAPHS ONE, THREE, FIVE AND SIX OF PARAGRAPH A OF  
22 THIS SUBDIVISION.

23 4. NO COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENT, PET SHOP, FIRM, CORPORATION OR PERSON  
24 SHALL SELL A DOG OR CAT THAT HAS BEEN SURGICALLY DEVOCALIZED, UNLESS A  
25 COPY OF THE WRITTEN NOTICE DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH E OF SUBDIVISION THREE  
26 OF THIS SECTION IS PROVIDED TO ANY PROSPECTIVE PURCHASER BEFORE THE  
27 PURCHASER ENTERS INTO AN AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE SAID ANIMAL. IN ADDITION  
28 TO THE PENALTIES SET FORTH IN THIS SECTION, A FAILURE TO PROVIDE SUCH  
29 NOTICE SHALL RENDER ANY PURCHASE AGREEMENT VOID AND A VIOLATION OF THIS  
30 PARAGRAPH SHALL CONSTITUTE AN UNFAIR OR DECEPTIVE ACT OR PRACTICE IN THE  
31 CONDUCT OF A TRADE OR COMMERCE UNDER SECTION THREE HUNDRED FORTY-NINE OF  
32 THE GENERAL BUSINESS LAW.

33 5. AS USED IN THIS SECTION, "DEVOCALIZATION" MEANS A SURGICAL PROCE-  
34 DURE ON THE LARYNX OR VOCAL CORDS OF AN ANIMAL WHICH CAUSES THE  
35 REDUCTION OR ELIMINATION OF VOCAL SOUNDS PRODUCED BY THAT ANIMAL AND  
36 INCLUDES PROCEDURES COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS DEBARKING OR SILENCING.

37 6. A. ANY PERSON WHO PERFORMS, OR CAUSES TO BE PERFORMED, THE SURGICAL  
38 DEVOCALIZATION OF A DOG OR CAT IN VIOLATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THIS  
39 SECTION SHALL BE GUILTY OF A CLASS A MISDEMEANOR PUNISHABLE BY IMPRISON-  
40 MENT FOR A PERIOD OF NOT MORE THAN ONE YEAR OR BY A FINE OF NOT TO  
41 EXCEED FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS OR BY BOTH SUCH FINE AND IMPRISONMENT.

42 B. IN ADDITION TO THE PENALTIES DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH A OF THIS  
43 SUBDIVISION, THE COURT MAY ORDER ANY PERSON WHO VIOLATES THE PROVISIONS  
44 OF THIS SECTION TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE A COURSE OF INSTRUCTION RELA-  
45 TIVE TO THE HUMANE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS OR BE BARRED FROM OWNING OR  
46 KEEPING A DOG OR CAT OR SHARING A RESIDENCE WITH ANOTHER WHO OWNS OR  
47 KEEPS A DOG OR CAT FOR A PERIOD OF TIME AS DETERMINED BY SAID COURT. THE  
48 COURT MAY FURTHER ORDER ANY PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS SECTION TO SURREN-  
49 DER THE ANIMAL ON WHICH THE PROCEDURE WAS PERFORMED, AS WELL AS ANY  
50 OTHER ANIMALS OWNED OR CONTROLLED BY SUCH PERSON.

51 C. ANY VETERINARIAN WHO PERFORMS A SURGICAL DEVOCALIZATION PROCEDURE  
52 IN VIOLATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION SHALL BE SUBJECT TO THE  
53 REVOCATION OR SUSPENSION OF HIS OR HER LICENSE.

54 S 2. The commissioner of agriculture and markets and the commissioner  
55 of education are authorized and directed to promulgate and implement all  
56 rules, regulations and standards they respectively deem necessary to

1 enforce the provisions of this act on or before the effective date of  
2 this act.  
3 S 3. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall  
4 have become a law.