

**HB 1556-FN - AS INTRODUCED**

2024 SESSION

24-2431

08/02

HOUSE BILL ***1556-FN***

AN ACT relative to exemptions from the rabies vaccine.

SPONSORS: Rep. Ammon, Hills. 42; Rep. Burroughs, Carr. 2

COMMITTEE: Environment and Agriculture

## ANALYSIS

This bill removes the requirement that dogs exempt from the rabies vaccine be muzzled.

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Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.

Matter removed from current law appears [~~in brackets and struck through.~~]

Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

24-2431

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## STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

*In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Four*

AN ACT relative to exemptions from the rabies vaccine.

*Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:*

1 Rabies Vaccine; Exemption. Amend RSA 436:100, II to read as follows:

II. A rabies immunization exemption may be issued, where illness or a veterinary medical condition warrants, by the local rabies control authority upon the written recommendation of a veterinarian licensed under RSA 332-B. [~~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 veterinarian licensed under RSA 332-B 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.~~]

2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

LBA  
24-2431  
12/8/23

**HB 1556-FN- FISCAL NOTE  
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT relative to exemptions from the rabies vaccine.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**     State             County             Local             None

<b>Estimated Political Subdivision Impact - Increase / (Decrease)</b>				
	<b>FY 2024</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>
<b>County Revenue</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>County Expenditures</b>	\$0	Indeterminable Increase	Indeterminable Increase	Indeterminable Increase
<b>Local Revenue</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Local Expenditures</b>	\$0	Indeterminable Increase	Indeterminable Increase	Indeterminable Increase

**METHODOLOGY:**

The New Hampshire Municipal Association made the following assumptions concerning the fiscal impact of the bill:

- Loosening of the exemption restrictions would increase the number of domesticated animals (dogs, cats, and ferrets) exempted from vaccination, and the elimination of the rabies isolation requirements would increase the number of interactions between unvaccinated dogs, cats, and ferrets and both wildlife and the public.
- Local law enforcement will need additional firearms training to ensure that they have the requisite skill to euthanize small, aggressive animals in a manner that leaves the brain intact. (The direct fluorescent antibody (DFA) test for rabies requires the animal's brain to be relatively fresh and in good condition)
- Local law enforcement may need to undergo additional training for tracking small, aggressive animals in mixed urban, suburban, and rural environments as well as training on the signs and symptoms of rabies.
- Law enforcement would incur additional personnel costs for officers to track suspected rabid animals, including domesticated animals that may have escaped their owners control. Such additional costs may include overtime, sick time, and compensation for exposure to a potentially rabid animal treatment with post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).
- Municipalities would purchase additional personal protective equipment (PPE) and would likely see increased insurance and workers' compensation costs due to exposure of municipal employees to rabid animals.
- Law enforcement, municipal code enforcement officers, and local health officers may see additional personnel costs and exposure costs, including costs for PPE, and investigative costs associated with domestic animal scratches or bites at locations where unvaccinated domestic animals are not currently allowed, such as at dog daycares, outdoor dining at restaurants and other locations.
- Municipalities will see increased costs related to unvaccinated domesticated animals being seized and impounded under the supervision of the local authorities for a period of not less than 10 days pursuant to RSA 436:105, 436:105-a, 436-105-b.

- Municipalities will likely see additional legal costs associated with lawsuits brought against the municipality for euthanizing domestic animals suspected of being rabid as well as additional incidences of seizing animals.

The Association states it is not possible to estimate the increased incidence of human-animal scratches/bites by unvaccinated animals and subsequent municipal costs. However, as the animal and human exposures increases, the costs will rise.

The New Hampshire Association of Counties indicated the county nursing homes do allow dogs into the facilities. The Association assumes, if a dog that has not been vaccinated bit a resident, staff or visitor of the home, it would have the potential to increase insurance rates.

The Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food states this bill will have no impact on the Department.

**AGENCIES CONTACTED:**

Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food, New Hampshire Municipal Association and New Hampshire Association of Counties