

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, July 30, 1974.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

In accordance with the provisions of Article LVI of the Amendments to the Constitution, I am returning, herewith, Senate Bill No. 849 entitled "AN ACT FURTHER REGULATING THE IMPOUNDMENT OF CERTAIN ANIMALS."

Last year you enacted and I approved legislation to reduce the "holding period" from 10 to 5 days for certain animals. That legislation was supported by a number of organizations — including the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Animal Rescue League of Boston. A number of persuasive reasons were advanced in support of the change: that the percentage of lost dogs returned to owners were being reclaimed within five days anyway; and that the extended periods had an adverse effect on some dogs because, even with the best of care, some would contract diseases which would render them unadoptable. It was argued that a 5-day period would still provide sufficient time for an owner to reclaim his pet, would increase the chances for animals to be adopted, and would reduce the number of incidents in which healthy animals were turned away while unadoptable animals filled available spaces.

I have been advised that, to a significant extent, the benefits anticipated from a reduction of the holding period have been realized. I am, however, aware that in some instances the 5-day period has been inadequate if the 5 days has been interpreted to include non-business days or when a particular facility is rarely open on evenings or weekends to accommodate owners restricted by an ordinary work day schedule.

In an effort to meet these objections without abandoning the benefits of the reduced period, I am recommending that the bill be amended to provide for a 7-day "holding period".

I therefore recommend that Senate Bill No. 849 be amended as follows: -

By striking out in line 3 of SECTION 1 of the engrossed bill the word "ten" and inserting in place thereof the word: - seven;

and by striking out in line 4 of SECTION 2 of said bill the word "ten" and inserting in place thereof the word: - seven;

and by striking out in line 3 of SECTION 3 of said bill the word "ten" and inserting in place thereof the word: - seven;

and by striking out SECTION 4 of said bill.

Respectfully submitted,

FRANCIS W. SARGENT,
Governor.