

Supporting Changes To The New York State Agriculture And Markets Law To Extend Oversight And Regulation For The Training Of Therapy Dogs In New York State

The Laws and Rules Committee (Chairman Bischoff and Legislators Decker, Rodriguez, Shapiro, Cummings, Maloney and Roberts) offers the following:

WHEREAS, the utilization of therapy dogs has become very popular among dog owners, with large numbers of people having certified their dogs and themselves to do therapy dog work with hospitals, convalescent homes, rehabilitation centers, trauma centers and private homes in New York State, and

WHEREAS, it is proven that therapy dogs are a meaningful asset in the healing process for medical and emotional relief of stress, pain, lowering blood pressure and general well being, and

WHEREAS, New York State has developed laws that are now used to define guide dogs and service dogs and as there now exists a movement to have certified therapy dogs work in many facilities, and recognizing the need to classify, define and develop laws that address therapy dogs, their handlers and the rights of both, and to legally certify the privileges that need to be considered and extended to this category of working dogs through specialized training and exams, and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of citizens of New York State to develop a comprehensive legal definition for certification of therapy dogs and laws that pertain to this category of working dog and their handlers, recognizing that professional requests for the use of therapy dogs is growing, as is the need for proper laws to regulate their authorized use, and

WHEREAS, due to the lack of comprehensive regulation of therapy dog training in New York State, many trainers are improperly convincing therapy dog owners that they own authentically trained therapy dogs, and many institutions are being offered the services of therapy dogs that have not been adequately or properly trained and tested, and

WHEREAS, the current definition of a therapy dog in New York State (Agriculture & Markets Law § 108.26 and § 110.3) does not specify the objectives of training and proposed legislation would specify the skills that a therapy dog should possess before licensing identified a properly trained therapy dog in New York State, and

WHEREAS, by implementing changes in law, New York State would take a leadership role by recognizing the increasing importance of properly training therapy dogs to provide valuable services in a broad range of institutions and environments

Resolution No. 382 December 10, 2008

Supporting Changes To The New York State Agriculture And Markets Law To Extend Oversight And Regulation For The Training Of Therapy Dogs In New York State

and by legally ensuring that therapy dogs have received extensive training and have passed a rigorous testing that benefits the people of New York State.

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature supports changes to New York State law that increase oversight and regulation of the process for certification of therapy dogs to benefit the people of New York State, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature shall forward copies of this resolution to Governor David Paterson, New York State Comptroller's Office, Senate Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos, Senate Minority Leader Malcolm Smith, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Assembly Majority Leader Ron Canestrari, Assembly Minority Leader James N. Tedisco, New York State Senators John J. Bonacic and William J. Larkin, Jr., New York State Assemblymen Kevin A. Cahill, Clifford W. Crouch, Peter Lopez and Thomas Kirwan, the New York State Association of Counties, and the Director of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets,

and moves its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: 30

NOES: 0

(Absent: Legislators Aiello, Felicello and Kraft)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

NONE