



OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

Michael R. Criss
First Selectman, Town of Harwinton
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
February 15th, 2023

Good afternoon, my name is Michael R. Criss, I am the First Selectman for the Town of Harwinton and I am submitting testimony regarding H.B. 6611 “An Act Concerning Online Dog Licenses from The Department of Agricultural”.

H.B. 6611 “An Act Concerning Online Dog Licenses from The Department of Agricultural”.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and submit testimony on proposed “An Act Concerning Online Dog Licenses from The Department of Agricultural”. The Town of Harwinton is in opposed to H.B. 6611 as drafted.

The Town of Harwinton supports the efforts to modernize the dog licensing process in order to reduce costs and create efficiencies. However, several provisions in this bill complicate the process of issuing dog licenses and receiving fees as well as unintended consequences.

The Town of Harwinton loses money of every dog tag license and cannot even begin to recover the cost of administering these licenses. Although some municipalities offer online renewal, which has helped to reduce some processing costs, there still needs to be a lot more done. Dog license fees should reflect the direct costs of the municipalities to administer them. By creating a statewide portal, although appears to head into the direction of saving these costs, it also may increase the need for portals set up at the town hall similar to pistol permit licensing portals with added staff costs and oversight to enter information for our aging population.

We are concerned that the bill does not reflect the recommendations of the working group and this bill as written overly complicates the licensing process which is different for every town. Small municipalities like Harwinton cannot afford to set up separate portals or help residents in licensing their dogs for the miniscule amount of money that we make from these licenses which is not even enough to help cover costs of animal control services.

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The Town of Harwinton would like to work with not only the working group but also legislatures to come up with reasonable solutions to help alleviate this burdensome process.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in opposition of H.B. 6611 on behalf of the Town of Harwinton. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Michael R. Criss
First Selectman, Town of Harwinton
Vice Chair, Northwest Hills Council of Governments
Legislative Chair, Northwest Hills Council of Governments

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General Assembly

January Session, 2023

Raised Bill No. 6611

LCO No. 3521



Referred to Committee on ENVIRONMENT

Introduced by:
(ENV)

AN ACT CONCERNING ON-LINE DOG LICENSES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 22-338 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

3 (a) Each owner or keeper of a dog of the age of six months or older,
4 except dogs kept under a kennel license as provided in section 22-342,
5 as amended by this act, shall cause such dog to be licensed in the town
6 clerk's office in the town where such dog is kept [, on] or, in the
7 alternative, electronically with the Department of Agriculture: (1) On or
8 before June thirtieth, annually, or at such time as such dog becomes six
9 months old, and annually thereafter, on or before June thirtieth; or (2)
10 on or before June thirtieth, or at such time as such dog becomes six
11 months old, and every three years thereafter, on or before June thirtieth.
12 The owner or keeper shall pay to such town clerk or the Department of
13 Agriculture for such annual license the sum of [seven] _____ dollars for
14 each [neutered male or spayed female] dog [and the sum of twelve
15 dollars for each unneutered male dog and each unspayed female dog,]

16 or the sum of ____ dollars for each triennial license, as applicable, and,
17 as applicable, one additional dollar [in each case as] for the town clerk's
18 fee for issuing a tag and license as provided in section 22-340, as
19 amended by this act. [Two dollars from] Twenty-five per cent of each
20 license fee collected for a neutered or spayed dog shall be deposited into
21 the animal population control account, established under section 22-
22 380g, as amended by this act. If an owner or keeper of a dog fails to
23 procure a license as required by this section, such owner or keeper shall
24 pay the appropriate license fee specified in this section, the town clerk's
25 fee, as applicable, and a penalty of one dollar for each month or fraction
26 thereof the dog remains unlicensed.

27 (b) Any owner or keeper applying for a license for a dog under
28 subsection (a) of this section, except for those owners or keepers
29 possessing a rabies vaccination exemption certificate, or a copy thereof,
30 issued pursuant to section 22-339b, shall submit to the town clerk or the
31 Department of Agriculture, as applicable, a rabies certificate signed by
32 a licensed veterinarian, or a copy thereof, stating that such dog has been
33 vaccinated against rabies, the date of the vaccination and the duration
34 of the immunity provided by the vaccine. No license shall be issued
35 unless the certificate indicates that the immunity provided by the
36 vaccine is effective at the time of licensing.

37 (c) Any owner or keeper applying for a license for a dog pursuant to
38 subsection (a) of this section that has been exempted from vaccination
39 against rabies pursuant to section 22-339b shall submit to the town clerk
40 or the Department of Agriculture, as applicable, a rabies vaccination
41 exemption certificate issued by the department, or a copy thereof, in lieu
42 of a rabies certificate.

43 (d) This section shall not apply to any dog which is imported into this
44 state for exhibition purposes and which does not remain in this state for
45 more than thirty days. Any person may import, from another state, any
46 licensed dog with collar, tag and rabies vaccination certificate, and keep
47 the same in this state for not more than thirty days, without complying
48 with the provisions of this section.

49 Sec. 2. Section 22-339 of the general statutes is repealed and the
50 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

51 Any person upon becoming the owner or keeper of any unlicensed
52 dog of the age of six months or older shall cause such dog to be licensed
53 within thirty days thereof until the thirtieth day of the ensuing June in
54 the manner and subject to the terms and conditions provided in section
55 22-338, as amended by this act. If the new owner has written proof of
56 purchase or transfer and the license is obtained within thirty days, [he]
57 such new owner shall not be required to pay any penalties as provided
58 by said section for failure to secure a license for a dog over six months
59 of age. Any person becoming the owner of a licensed dog shall present
60 the license and tag of such dog to the town clerk of the town in which
61 [he] such person resides and, for a fee of one dollar, such town clerk
62 shall issue, in lieu thereof, a new license and tag, which shall be recorded
63 in the name of the new owner. Such town clerk shall retain the old
64 license and tag. [in his possession.]

65 Sec. 3. Section 22-339a of the general statutes is repealed and the
66 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

67 (a) The town clerk of any town and the Commissioner of Agriculture,
68 as applicable, may individually or jointly deputize any employees of
69 any dog pound in such town as agents for the issuance of dog licenses
70 and tags, provided the town clerk shall be solely responsible for
71 compliance with the provisions of the statutes relating to the duties of
72 the town clerk in connection with such licenses and tags and the moneys
73 received therefor.

74 (b) Any person acquiring an unlicensed dog from a dog pound shall
75 be issued a temporary license by the town clerk or the Department of
76 Agriculture, as applicable, or [his] the town clerk's or department's
77 agent deputized pursuant to subsection (a) of this section which shall
78 expire thirty days after the issuance thereof. Prior to the expiration of a
79 temporary license, the person holding the license shall apply for a
80 license for the remainder of the license year, pay the appropriate license

81 fee specified in section 22-338, as amended by this act, and submit a
82 certificate signed by a veterinarian, or a copy or electronic copy, as
83 applicable, thereof, stating (1) that the dog has been vaccinated against
84 rabies, (2) the date of the vaccination and (3) the duration of the
85 immunity provided by the vaccine. No license shall be issued unless the
86 certificate indicates that the immunity provided by the vaccine is
87 effective at the time of licensing.

88 Sec. 4. Subsection (a) of section 22-339c of the general statutes is
89 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
90 *1, 2023*):

91 (a) A certificate of rabies vaccination shall be (1) a form approved by
92 the National Association of Public Health Veterinarians, (2) any form
93 approved by the State Veterinarian, or (3) any form that has the
94 following information regarding the vaccinated animal: (A) The name
95 and address of its owner; (B) a description of the animal which specifies
96 its species, breed, age, color or markings and sex; (C) the date of the
97 vaccination, the duration of the immunity provided by the vaccination,
98 the producer of the vaccine and the vaccine serial number; (D) the rabies
99 tag number; and (E) the signature and license number of the
100 veterinarian administering the vaccination. Such certificate shall be the
101 official proof of rabies vaccination submitted to a town clerk or the
102 Department of Agriculture, as applicable, in accordance with the
103 provisions of section 22-338, as amended by this act, or 22-339a, as
104 amended by this act.

105 Sec. 5. Section 22-340 of the general statutes is repealed and the
106 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

107 (a) Each person complying with the provisions of section 22-338, as
108 amended by this act, 22-339, as amended by this act, or 22-342, as
109 amended by this act, shall receive from the town clerk or the
110 Department of Agriculture, as applicable, a license on a form prescribed
111 by the commissioner, which license shall contain a description of the
112 dog and the number under which such dog is licensed. The town clerk

113 or the Department of Agriculture, as applicable, shall issue to such
114 person a tag or plate of material prescribed by the commissioner, upon
115 which shall be distinctly marked [the name of the town in which such
116 dog is licensed,] the license number and the year of license. [No town
117 clerk shall issue such license or tag to any person for any neutered male
118 or spayed female dog not previously licensed as such unless the person
119 causing the dog to be licensed exhibits to the town clerk a certificate
120 from a licensed veterinarian stating that such veterinarian has neutered
121 or spayed the dog or that, after examining the dog, he finds that the dog
122 has been neutered or spayed.]

123 (b) The town clerk shall provide for the issuance and renewal through
124 the mail of licenses issued under sections 22-338, as amended by this act,
125 and 22-339, as amended by this act. The [town clerk] Department of
126 Agriculture shall provide for the electronic issuance and renewal of
127 licenses issued by the department pursuant to sections 22-338, as
128 amended by this act, and 22-339, as amended by this act, and may make
129 information concerning the department's electronic dog licensing
130 system and applications for such licenses available at such facilities as
131 kennels, pet stores, veterinarian offices, humane society offices and pet
132 grooming establishments.

133 Sec. 6. Section 22-341 of the general statutes is repealed and the
134 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

135 (a) Each owner or keeper of a licensed dog shall keep around its neck
136 or body a collar or harness of leather or other suitable material, to which
137 shall be securely attached a tag or plate issued to such person by the
138 town clerk or the Department of Agriculture, as applicable. If any such
139 tag or plate is lost, the owner or keeper of such dog shall forthwith
140 secure a substitute tag or plate from the town clerk or the Department
141 of Agriculture, as applicable, at a cost of [fifty cents] one dollar.

142 (b) The town clerk of each town shall order a sufficient number of
143 such tags or plates from the commissioner, who shall furnish the same
144 at a cost of five cents each, which cost shall be paid by the town on the

145 approval of the town clerk. Any balance of the moneys received by the
146 commissioner after deducting the cost of the tags, the expenses
147 incidental to their distribution to the town clerks and the expenses
148 incidental to the enforcement of the provisions of this chapter, shall be
149 accounted for by the commissioner to the Comptroller. The design and
150 the shape of such tags or plates shall be changed each year, and such
151 tags or plates for each year shall be of uniform design and material
152 throughout the state. Any dog found roaming at large upon any public
153 highway or common or upon the premises of any person other than its
154 owner, without a tag as provided in this section, shall be presumed to
155 be an unlicensed dog.

156 Sec. 7. Section 22-345 of the general statutes, as amended by section 5
157 of public act 22-54, is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
158 thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

159 Any person with a disability who is the owner or keeper of a dog
160 which has been trained as a service animal, is in training to become a
161 service animal for such person, is in training to become a service animal
162 or is enrolled in a program described in section 17a-22ee shall receive a
163 license and tag for such dog from the town clerk of the town where such
164 dog is owned or kept or, electronically, from the Department of
165 Agriculture. Such license and tag shall be issued in accordance with the
166 provisions of section 22-340, as amended by this act, and no fee shall be
167 required of the owner or keeper of any such dog. [When any such dog
168 has not been previously licensed, by the town clerk to whom application
169 is being made and it is not obvious that the dog is a service animal, such
170 town clerk may inquire of such owner or keeper whether the dog is a
171 service animal required because of a disability and what work or task
172 the dog has been trained to perform.] Any person who has a dog placed
173 with such person temporarily, including for breeding purposes, by a
174 nonprofit organization established for the purpose of training or
175 educating the dog as a service animal shall receive a license and tag for
176 such dog from the town clerk of the town where such dog is kept or the
177 Department of Agriculture, as applicable. Such license and tag shall be
178 issued in accordance with the provisions of section 22-340, as amended

179 by this act, and no fee shall be required for such license and tag,
180 provided such person [presents confirmation] confirms that such dog
181 was placed with such person by such organization. As used in this
182 section, (1) "disability" means any one or more of the following, as
183 defined in section 46a-51: (A) An intellectual disability, (B) physically
184 disabled, (C) a mental disability, or (D) a learning disability; and (2)
185 "service animal" has the same meaning as provided in 28 CFR 35.104, as
186 amended from time to time, and includes a service animal in training.

187 Sec. 8. Section 22-347 of the general statutes is repealed and the
188 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

189 (a) Within thirty days after receipt of the fees for dog licenses and
190 tags, each town clerk shall deduct one dollar for each dog licensed, two
191 dollars for each kennel license issued and fifty cents for each
192 replacement tag issued and pay the balance to the town treasurer or
193 other proper fiscal officer. Each town treasurer or fiscal officer, as the
194 case may be, shall keep a separate dog fund account of all fees received
195 from the town clerk, and all receipts from the municipal animal control
196 officer and expended by said officer under the provisions of this chapter,
197 and shall pay to the Commissioner of Agriculture, on September first of
198 each year, fifty per cent of all moneys received from the sale of licenses
199 prior to July first, or forty per cent of all such moneys if the town has
200 made a survey of unlicensed dogs in accordance with the provisions of
201 section 22-349, and include with such payment a statement of the
202 number of licenses issued during such year. All moneys received from
203 licenses sold after June thirtieth and all moneys received from the
204 municipal animal control officer [and all license fees returned to the
205 town by the State Treasurer, at the request of the commissioner, under
206 the provisions of section 22-348] shall be kept by the town treasurer or
207 other fiscal officer in the separate dog fund account. The town treasurer
208 or other fiscal officer shall, on the ensuing September first, send fifty per
209 cent, or forty per cent as the case may be, of all license fees in such
210 account to the commissioner, including any penalty fees collected
211 pursuant to section 22-338. All payments to the commissioner shall be
212 accompanied by an account thereof in a form prescribed by the

213 commissioner and a copy of such account shall be sent to the
214 commissioner. Upon the failure of any town treasurer or other fiscal
215 officer to pay any amount due pursuant to this section, or any portion
216 thereof, within forty-five days from its due date, the commissioner shall
217 add interest of one and one-fourth per cent per month or fraction thereof
218 on the amount unpaid per month or fraction thereof from the due date
219 of such payment to the date of payment and a penalty in the amount of
220 ten per cent of the amount unpaid or fifty dollars, whichever is greater.
221 All funds in the dog fund account, except such funds as are to be sent to
222 the commissioner, shall be used only for the compensation of municipal
223 animal control officers, license certificates, tags, the construction and
224 maintenance of dog pounds, the detention and care of impounded dogs
225 in accordance with section 22-336, municipal animal control officer's
226 equipment, dog supplies and such veterinary fees as are provided for
227 by law or regulations and shall not be used for any other purpose except
228 upon written approval of the commissioner. No fees paid into the
229 treasury of the town for tags or licenses for dogs shall be paid back to
230 the persons from whom they were collected.

231 (b) The Commissioner of Agriculture shall, not later than thirty days
232 after the Department of Agriculture's receipt electronic receipt of fees
233 for dog licenses and tags, remit to each town clerk twenty-five per cent
234 of each license fee paid electronically to the department for each dog
235 licensed within such town. The Commissioner of Agriculture shall keep
236 a separate dog licensing fee account consisting of all fees received and
237 expended by the commissioner in accordance with the provisions of this
238 chapter.

239 Sec. 9. Section 22-349 of the general statutes is repealed and the
240 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

241 The town clerk of each town and the Department of Agriculture shall,
242 annually, on or before July first, provide the municipal animal control
243 officer or regional animal control officer of each town with a copy of
244 each dog license issued in such town by such clerk or department. Such
245 municipal animal control officer or regional animal control officer shall

246 thereupon make diligent search for any unlicensed dog required to be
 247 licensed by section 22-338, as amended by this act. The commissioner
 248 [shall] may adopt regulations in accordance with the provisions of
 249 chapter 54 establishing procedures for such search. If the owner of any
 250 such unlicensed dog is not known, the municipal animal control officer
 251 or regional animal control officer shall impound such dog. The owning
 252 or keeping of an unlicensed or impounded dog and the failure to
 253 purchase a license and pay the advertising and redemption fee within
 254 one hundred and twenty hours from the time the dog was impounded
 255 shall be an infraction.

256 Sec. 10. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2023*) The Commissioner of
 257 Agriculture shall create an electronic dog licensing form to be used by
 258 the Department of Agriculture to electronically process dog licenses
 259 pursuant to chapter 435 of the general statutes. Such form shall be in
 260 addition to the standard form created by the commissioner pursuant to
 261 section 22-380g of the general statutes. The Commissioner shall
 262 distribute information about such electronic form to veterinarians and
 263 the operators of pet shops, pet grooming facilities, municipal pounds or
 264 dog training facilities who voluntarily agree to make such information
 265 available for the convenience of dog owners.

266 Sec. 11. Sections 22-9, 22-348, 22-352 and 22-380l of the general
 267 statutes are repealed. (*Effective October 1, 2023*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	22-338
Sec. 2	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	22-339
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	22-339a
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	22-339c(a)
Sec. 5	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	22-340
Sec. 6	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	22-341
Sec. 7	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	22-345
Sec. 8	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	22-347
Sec. 9	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	22-349
Sec. 10	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	New section

Sec. 11	October 1, 2023	Repealer section
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Statement of Purpose:

To authorize the issuance of on-line dog licenses from the Department of Agriculture in addition to the current town clerk process for receiving such licenses.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]