

**HB 1406 - DIGEST**

Finds that: (1) Tens of thousands of stray and homeless dogs and cats are handled by Washington's animal care and control agencies and other animal welfare organizations each year, costing millions of dollars;

(2) The most effective and humane way to reduce the number of animals dying in shelters is to reduce animal overpopulation through a targeted, statewide spay and neuter surgery network; and

(3) A companion animal spay/neuter assistance program is necessary to address the problems of companion animal overpopulation. The program should be funded through a fee that is practical, administratively feasible, and targeted at the class of Washington residents that is most responsible for companion animals and their impact on our communities: Owners of cats and dogs.

Establishes the companion animal spay/neuter assistance program to provide for spaying and neutering of companion animals owned by low-income individuals and for spaying and neutering feral and free-roaming cats.

Directs the department of agriculture to administer the program.

Authorizes any private veterinarian, private veterinary practice, animal care and control agency, and nonprofit organization whose services include performing spay and neuter surgeries on companion animals to participate in the program.

Creates the companion animal spay/neuter assistance account.

Authorizes the department of agriculture to accept any donations, grants, bequests, and devises, conditional or otherwise, or money, property, service, or other things of value which may be received from the United States or any agency thereof, any governmental agency, any institution, person, firm, or corporation, public and private, to be held, used, or applied for the purposes of the program.

Provides penalties.