

1 SB95
2 87671-1
3 By Senator Little (T)
4 RFD: Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability
5 First Read: 05-FEB-08

SYNOPSIS: Under existing law, the State Emergency Management Agency is directed and authorized to oversee the planning and implementation of a response program for emergency management. There is no specific requirement that the program for emergency management include any provisions for the evacuation and sheltering of household pets and service animals.

This bill would require the State Emergency Management Agency, in consultation with local emergency management agencies, to create a comprehensive plan for the evacuation and sheltering of household pets and service animals.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

To require the State Emergency Management Agency, in consultation with local emergency management agencies, to

1 create a comprehensive plan for the evacuation and sheltering
2 of household pets and service animals and to provide for the
3 contents of the plan.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

5 Section 1. (a) For purposes of this section, the
6 term "household pet" shall mean any domesticated cat, dog, or
7 other domesticated animal normally maintained on the property
8 of the owner or person who cares for the animal.

9 (b) No later than 12 months after the effective date
10 of this act, the State Emergency Management Agency, in
11 consultation with local emergency management agencies, shall
12 formulate an emergency operation plan for the humane
13 evacuation, transport, and temporary sheltering of service
14 animals and household pets in times of emergency or disaster.
15 The plan shall:

16 (1) Enable persons with disabilities, as defined in
17 the Americans with Disabilities Act, who utilize service
18 animals to be evacuated, transported, and sheltered with those
19 service animals and inform all facilities that provide shelter
20 to persons with disabilities who are accompanied by their
21 service animals of their legal obligation to shelter both the
22 disabled person and the service animal.

23 (2) Identify shelters and other state facilities
24 that are designed and equipped to accept and temporarily house
25 household pets and assist in the development of guidelines for
26 such shelters including, but not limited to, criteria for
27 admission, health and safety standards, basic minimum animal

1 care standards regarding nutrition, space, hygiene, and
2 medical needs, and protocols and procedures for ensuring
3 adequate sheltering, management, and veterinary staffing for
4 such shelters.

5 (3) Enable, wherever possible, pet and pet-owner
6 evacuations for disabled, elderly, special needs residents,
7 and all other residents whenever such evacuations can be
8 accomplished without endangering human life.

9 (4) Establish an identification system to enable
10 household pet owners who are separated from their pet during
11 an evacuation to locate and reclaim the pet.

12 (5) Allow household pets in cages or carriers that
13 safely and securely confine the pets and are specifically
14 designed for the containment and transport of pets to utilize
15 public transportation during an impending disaster when doing
16 so does not endanger human life.

17 (6) Implement a public information program to
18 provide guidance to household pet owners in formulating their
19 own evacuation plan for their household pets and service
20 animals and inform the pet owners of the resources available
21 to them.

22 (7) Require animal shelters, humane societies,
23 veterinary offices, boarding kennels, breeders, animal
24 hospitals, schools, and animal testing facilities to create
25 evacuation plans for their animals. The plan shall be filed
26 with the State Emergency Management Agency and shall be made
27 available for public inspection.

1 (8) Coordinate the development and establishment of
2 a volunteer worker training program to assist in the
3 evacuation and sheltering of household pets and service
4 animals.

5 Section 2. All laws or parts of laws which conflict
6 with this act are repealed.

7 Section 3. This act shall become effective on the
8 first day of the third month following its passage and
9 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.