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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 3300

05/04/2023

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The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Public Safety Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act

1.2 relating to public safety; establishing the Office of Animal Protection; providing

1.3 for peace officer and other professional training; authorizing working groups;

1.4 establishing a courtroom animal advocate procedure; requiring support for forensic

1.5 laboratories; authorizing the receipt of grants and contributions; amending the

1.6 definition of crime of violence; requiring reports; requiring rulemaking;

1.7 appropriating money; amending Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 624.712,

1.8 subdivision 5; proposing coding for new law as Minnesota Statutes, chapter 299P.

1.9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.10 Section 1. 299P.01 POLICY DECLARATION.

1.11 Subdivision 1. Findings. Because of ongoing occurrences of animal cruelty throughout

1.12 the state of Minnesota and to ensure that local authorities are adequately prepared to deal

1.13 with animal cruelty crimes and protect the public peace, health, and safety, the legislature

1.14 finds and declares it necessary:

1.15 (1) to create an Office of Animal Protection and to require the office to establish regional

1.16 animal units to assist in the enforcement of animal cruelty statutes;

1.17 (2) to confer upon the commissioner the powers to enforce animal cruelty statutes in

1.18 this chapter;

1.19 (3) to cooperate with and provide services to localities, the state, Tribal nations, and the

1.20 federal government regarding animal cruelty cases; and

1.21 (4) to provide all available financial assistance to eligible applicants related to animal

1.22 cruelty.

1.23 Subd. 2. Link to human violence. It is further declared that animal cruelty crimes are

1.24 linked to human violence, including domestic violence, child abuse, sexual abuse, elder

2.1 abuse, terroristic threats, illegal gambling, drugs, and firearms, arson, fraud, or other property
 2.2 and human-related laws; and, therefore, it is the purpose of these sections and the policy of
 2.3 the state that all functions related to enforcing animal cruelty statutes must be coordinated
 2.4 with various state agencies, localities, Tribal nations, the federal government, other states,
 2.5 and private agencies to protect animals and humans.

2.6 **Sec. 2. [299P.02] OFFICE OF ANIMAL PROTECTION; CREATION; PURPOSE;**
 2.7 **SCOPE.**

2.8 Subdivision 1. **Creation.** An Office of Animal Protection is created in the Department
 2.9 of Public Safety.

2.10 Subd. 2. **Purpose.** In collaboration with criminal justice partners, the office must protect
 2.11 animals by preventing, investigating, and prosecuting crimes of animal cruelty. The office
 2.12 must also use the office's expertise and resources to protect human victims in cases related
 2.13 to animal cruelty.

2.14 Subd. 3. **Scope.** This chapter applies to enforcement of animal cruelty statutes in
 2.15 Minnesota, including but not limited to chapter 343; sections 346.155, 346.35 to 346.44,
 2.16 609.294, 609.596, and 609.597; and other law that, if violated, results in cruelty to animals.
 2.17 Scope may also pertain to laws linked to human violence if the animal cruelty case involves
 2.18 human violence.

2.19 **Sec. 3. [299P.03] DEFINITIONS.**

2.20 Subdivision 1. **Application.** As used in this chapter, the following terms have the
 2.21 meanings given.

2.22 Subd. 2. **Animal.** "Animal" has the meaning given in section 343.20, subdivision 2.

2.23 Subd. 3. **Animal cruelty.** "Animal cruelty" means an act, omission, or neglect that causes
 2.24 or permits unnecessary or unjustifiable pain or suffering to an animal, or causes or permits
 2.25 the unnecessary or unjustifiable death of an animal.

2.26 Subd. 4. **Caregiving agency.** "Caregiving agency" means an animal shelter, humane
 2.27 society, veterinary clinic, or other animal care agency that has temporary custody of an
 2.28 animal after the animal has been seized.

2.29 Subd. 5. **Command team.** "Command team" means the team established according to
 2.30 section 299P.06.

2.31 Subd. 6. **Commissioner.** "Commissioner" means the commissioner of public safety.

3.1 Subd. 7. **Deputy special agent.** "Deputy special agent" means an agent who is trained
3.2 and certified by the Office of Animal Protection and specializes in investigating violations
3.3 of animal cruelty laws. This position may be a volunteer, paid-on-call, part-time, or full-time
3.4 agent who assists in the enforcement of animal cruelty laws and reports to a regional animal
3.5 protection and response unit.

3.6 Subd. 8. **Director.** "Director" means the director of the Office of Animal Protection.

3.7 Subd. 9. **Guardian.** "Guardian" means a person who has control, custody, possession,
3.8 title, or other legal interest in an animal. Custody, control, or possession of an animal may
3.9 be indicated by physically confining the animal in an area controlled by the guardian or the
3.10 guardian's provision of regular food, water, or care to the animal.

3.11 Subd. 10. **Law enforcement agency.** "Law enforcement agency" has the meaning given
3.12 in section 626.84, subdivision 1, paragraph (f).

3.13 Subd. 11. **Office.** "Office" means the Office of Animal Protection.

3.14 Subd. 12. **Peace officer.** "Peace officer" has the meaning given in section 626.84,
3.15 subdivision 1, paragraph (c).

3.16 Subd. 13. **Lead special agent.** "Lead special agent" means a peace officer who is trained,
3.17 certified, and employed by the Office of Animal Protection, specializes in investigations of
3.18 violation of animal cruelty laws, and oversees a regional animal protection and response
3.19 unit.

3.20 **Sec. 4. [299P.04] POWERS AND DUTIES; REPORT.**

3.21 Subdivision 1. **Powers and duties.** The office must provide statewide expertise and
3.22 support in the protection of animals by assisting in the enforcement of animal cruelty statutes.
3.23 The office must perform duties as the commissioner may direct, including:

3.24 (1) assisting local, state, Tribal, and federal agencies and other criminal justice partners,
3.25 including federal agencies, in investigating and prosecuting animal cruelty cases in the state;

3.26 (2) developing uniform response protocols for receiving, investigating, and prosecuting
3.27 complaints of animal cruelty and coordinating efforts with other authorities that enforce
3.28 animal cruelty statutes;

3.29 (3) providing training in animal cruelty and animal law;

3.30 (4) in collaboration with the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and other agencies,
3.31 collecting, maintaining, and analyzing data related to animal cruelty cases; and

4.1 (5) educating the public to recognize and report animal cruelty and collaborating with
 4.2 criminal justice partners and others to provide animal cruelty education.

4.3 Subd. 2. **Performance report.** On or before January 15 each year, the director must
 4.4 submit an annual report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative
 4.5 committees with jurisdiction over public safety finance and policy on the office's operations,
 4.6 including data regarding the animal cruelty cases that the office investigated.

4.7 **Sec. 5. [299P.05] DIRECTOR; ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

4.8 Subdivision 1. **Director.** The commissioner shall appoint a director who has the power
 4.9 to administer this chapter. The director may employ staff to perform the duties in this chapter
 4.10 as necessary to fulfill the office's responsibilities. The director is subject to any other
 4.11 conditions that the commissioner deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

4.12 Subd. 2. **Advisory committee.** The commissioner may establish an advisory committee,
 4.13 pursuant to section 15.059, consisting of at least 15 members with knowledge of animal
 4.14 law, animal cruelty, and animal cruelty prevention. This committee must represent specialized
 4.15 disciplines and diverse skills and experiences in the reporting and enforcement of animal
 4.16 cruelty laws and care of animals, including members of the public who are familiar with
 4.17 animal cruelty cases. The committee must adopt procedures to govern the committee's
 4.18 conduct as necessary and select a chair from among the committee's members and may
 4.19 establish subcommittees to consider specific topics or develop targeted initiatives.

4.20 **Sec. 6. [299P.06] UNIFIED COMMAND STRUCTURE; DEPUTY DIRECTORS.**

4.21 Subdivision 1. **Unified command structure; command team.** The office must use a
 4.22 unified command structure, known as the command team, to fulfill the duties in this chapter.
 4.23 This team must report to the director and must include the director and the following deputy
 4.24 directors:

4.25 (1) the deputy director of investigation services;

4.26 (2) the deputy director of prosecution services;

4.27 (3) the deputy director of forensic veterinary medicine services;

4.28 (4) the deputy director of human welfare; and

4.29 (5) the deputy director of animal care services.

4.30 Subd. 2. **Disciplines; deputy directors.** (a) A deputy director must perform the following
 4.31 duties:

5.1 (1) collaborate with the director and command team on animal cruelty investigation,
5.2 prosecution, and prevention;

5.3 (2) provide information and advice to local, state, Tribal, and federal agencies handling
5.4 animal cruelty cases that relate to the deputy director's expertise;

5.5 (3) develop guidelines specific to the duties of the deputy director's position;

5.6 (4) develop and perform training for office staff and other individuals involved in
5.7 investigating and prosecuting animal cruelty cases; and

5.8 (5) promote public reporting of animal cruelty.

5.9 (b) The office must employ the following deputy directors:

5.10 (1) a deputy director of investigation services who must:

5.11 (i) be a licensed peace officer;

5.12 (ii) oversee all regional animal protection and response units;

5.13 (iii) oversee the certification of lead special agents and deputy special agents; and

5.14 (iv) act as the primary liaison for a unit to police departments and sheriff offices;

5.15 (2) a deputy director of prosecution services who is a licensed attorney with knowledge
5.16 of animal law and the prosecution of animal cruelty crimes. This deputy director must:

5.17 (i) be hired by the Office of the Attorney General in consultation with the commissioner
5.18 and director;

5.19 (ii) be designated as an assistant attorney general assigned to the Office of Animal
5.20 Protection to provide expertise in animal law;

5.21 (iii) upon request by a county or city attorney, prosecute or assist in prosecuting animal
5.22 cruelty cases; and

5.23 (iv) form federal and state partnerships to address crimes against animals;

5.24 (3) a deputy director of forensic veterinary medicine services who is a licensed
5.25 veterinarian with knowledge in forensic veterinary medicine who must:

5.26 (i) assist animal protection and response units by providing on-scene and off-scene
5.27 coordination for the examination of animals and collection of evidence in animal cruelty
5.28 cases;

5.29 (ii) establish and maintain a network of veterinarians with expertise in forensic veterinary
5.30 science to assist in animal cruelty cases; and

6.1 (iii) collaborate with laboratories in Minnesota and nationwide specializing in animal
 6.2 forensic science;

6.3 (4) a deputy director of human services with expertise in human services and human
 6.4 victims who must:

6.5 (i) form a statewide network of child protection services and adult protection services,
 6.6 social workers, mental health professionals, care assistants, and other agencies to assist the
 6.7 office and law enforcement in crimes involving both animal cruelty and human violence;
 6.8 and

6.9 (ii) in collaboration with the Office of Justice Programs and victim advocates, establish
 6.10 a program to assist human victims involved in animal cruelty crimes; and

6.11 (5) a deputy director of animal care services who has expertise in animal care, handling,
 6.12 housing, and transportation and who must:

6.13 (i) form a statewide network for seizing, transporting, placing, and caring for seized or
 6.14 surrendered animals from a crime scene;

6.15 (ii) collaborate with caregiving agencies as defined by section 299P.03, subdivision 4;
 6.16 and

6.17 (iii) provide on-scene and off-scene assistance with seizing and placing animals with
 6.18 caregiving agencies.

6.19 Subd. 3. **Support personnel; shared business resources.** The director, in consultation
 6.20 with the commissioner, may share personnel and resources with the Department of Public
 6.21 Safety to perform duties under this chapter and other business support services. Services
 6.22 used must be paid for by office appropriations. The commissioner may permit Department
 6.23 of Public Safety resources not directly assigned to the office to be used to assist the office
 6.24 in fulfilling duties under this chapter.

6.25 Sec. 7. **[299P.07] ANIMAL PROTECTION AND RESPONSE UNIT; SPECIAL**
 6.26 **AGENTS; CERTIFICATION.**

6.27 Subdivision 1. **Animal protection and response unit.** (a) To assist communities in
 6.28 enforcing animal cruelty laws and conducting investigations, the director must create animal
 6.29 protection and response units throughout Minnesota.

6.30 (b) The director must regionally establish at least six animal protection and response
 6.31 units. The director may adjust regions based on the number of crimes, type of crimes, and
 6.32 other administrative or operational factors deemed necessary by the director.

7.1 (c) The investigation services director, in consultation with the command team, must
7.2 designate staff for each regional unit who are responsible for organizing, administering,
7.3 and operating the unit, including field response teams.

7.4 (d) Upon request by a county sheriff office, city police department, Tribal nation, state
7.5 agency, or federal government, an animal protection and response unit may assist in
7.6 investigating animal cruelty.

7.7 (e) If contacted directly, the office must investigate a complaint of animal cruelty and
7.8 must notify local law enforcement immediately before initiating the investigation.

7.9 (f) A person, organization, or agency from the United States or Canada that has relevant
7.10 skills may assist the office in any animal cruelty response when such aid is requested by
7.11 the director.

7.12 Subd. 2. **Special agents.** (a) The director must determine the hiring process for an
7.13 applicant for a special agent position in an animal protection and response unit. The number
7.14 of agents that the director may hire must be determined by legislative funding and the office's
7.15 budget.

7.16 (b) The office must employ a special agent to lead each regional unit. The lead special
7.17 agent must have expertise in investigating animal cruelty cases. The director, in consultation
7.18 with the commissioner and command team, must establish qualifications and criteria for
7.19 the position and make the appointments for each region. The lead special agent must, at a
7.20 minimum:

7.21 (1) be a peace officer who meets the office's qualifications;

7.22 (2) be trained and certified by the office in animal law and animal cruelty investigations;

7.23 (3) report to the office's deputy director of investigation services; and

7.24 (4) supervise services that the animal protection and response unit provides and coordinate
7.25 with other services provided by the office.

7.26 (c) The office must also employ or work with deputy special agents to investigate animal
7.27 cruelty crimes and animal care services. A deputy special agent:

7.28 (1) may be employed by the office, a city police department, a sheriff's office, a nonprofit
7.29 corporation, a county, a city, or any other local governmental entity or political subdivision
7.30 of the state or be self-employed if the individual meets all qualifications determined by the
7.31 office;

8.1 (2) must apply to and be certified by the office and meet all qualifications determined
8.2 by the office;

8.3 (3) must investigate animal cruelty crimes, including seizing and placing animals, under
8.4 the direction of a lead special agent; and

8.5 (4) must follow requirements determined by the office and animal protection and response
8.6 unit.

8.7 Subd. 3. **Compliance coordinator.** Each animal protection and response unit may
8.8 employ a compliance coordinator to advise special agents regarding enforcement action
8.9 compliance with local, state, and federal law. A compliance coordinator must be trained
8.10 and certified by the office.

8.11 Subd. 4. **Certification.** (a) The office must:

8.12 (1) develop processes for recruiting, hiring, and certifying applicants for positions as
8.13 special agents and other office staff as necessary to carry out the duties in this chapter;

8.14 (2) determine classifications and subclassifications for commissioning agents or
8.15 personnel; and

8.16 (3) identify potential conflicts of interest and disqualifying violations.

8.17 (b) A commission issued by the office must:

8.18 (1) require special agents and office staff to participate in training and continuing
8.19 education courses;

8.20 (2) expire on the anniversary date of the commission's issuance;

8.21 (3) be renewed at the director's discretion;

8.22 (4) be suspended or revoked at the director's discretion; and

8.23 (5) be approved by the Department of Public Safety.

8.24 (c) A certified agent who is not employed by the office must provide proof of liability
8.25 insurance coverage to the office.

8.26 Sec. 8. **[299P.08] ENFORCEMENT.**

8.27 Subdivision 1. **Investigation.** The office must conduct any investigation necessary to
8.28 comply with this chapter.

8.29 Subd. 2. **Subpoenas.** The director may issue an administrative subpoena that requires
8.30 the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, memoranda, papers, documents,

9.1 articles, or instruments and compels the disclosure by a witness of any fact relative to the
9.2 matter under investigation. Upon the failure or refusal of a witness to obey a subpoena, the
9.3 director may petition a district court and, upon a proper showing, the court may enter an
9.4 order compelling the witness to appear and testify or produce documentary evidence. A
9.5 witness' failure to obey such a court order is punishable as a contempt of court.

9.6 Subd. 3. **Cease and desist.** (a) Whenever the director has reasonable cause to believe
9.7 that a violation of chapter 343 has occurred and believes that immediate enforcement is
9.8 necessary, the director may issue a cease and desist notice that may require a person to cease
9.9 violating any provision of chapter 343.

9.10 (b) A cease and desist notice must describe the provisions alleged to have been violated
9.11 and the facts alleged to that constituted the violation.

9.12 (c) If a person fails to comply with a cease and desist notice within 24 hours, the director
9.13 may file a temporary restraining order with a district court or for injunctive relief to prevent
9.14 any further violation.

9.15 (d) No stay of a cease and desist notice may be issued before a hearing in a district court
9.16 involving both parties.

9.17 Subd. 4. **Disposition of dead animals.** (a) The office may safely dispose of dead animals
9.18 as necessary for an investigation or prosecution of an animal cruelty case.

9.19 (b) Unless a veterinary consultation would cause an undue delay or create a risk to health
9.20 or safety to a human or animal, the office must consult with a veterinarian when taking
9.21 possession or control of a dead animal and order a forensic necropsy of the body.

9.22 Subd. 5. **Search and seizure without a warrant.** (a) If a deputy special agent, lead
9.23 special agent, or peace officer has probable cause to believe that an animal is in imminent
9.24 danger of suffering a serious injury, infirmity, or death, the deputy special agent, lead special
9.25 agent, or peace officer may enter upon private property to render emergency aid to the
9.26 animal.

9.27 (b) If a deputy special agent, lead special agent, or peace officer has probable cause to
9.28 believe that an animal is in imminent danger of suffering a serious injury, infirmity, or death,
9.29 the deputy special agent, lead special agent, or peace officer may seize the animal without
9.30 a warrant. The special agent or peace officer shall immediately take a seized animal under
9.31 chapter 343 to a veterinarian who is licensed pursuant to chapter 156 to provide medical
9.32 attention to the animal and to assess the animal's health. Any person or caregiving agency

10.1 receiving an animal that is seized pursuant to chapter 343 must provide the animal with
10.2 minimum care.

10.3 (c) A special agent or peace officer is not liable for any damages for an entry under this
10.4 section or chapter 343, provided that the special agent or peace officer does not use any
10.5 more force than is reasonably necessary to enter the property and remove the animal.

10.6 (d) The guardian from whom an animal is seized must be given the same legal remedies
10.7 available to the guardian or any potential claimant under chapter 343.

10.8 **Sec. 9. [299P.09] CROSS REPORTING.**

10.9 Subdivision 1. **Public policy.** As declared by the legislature pursuant to chapter 260E
10.10 and section 626.557, the public policy of this state is to protect children whose health or
10.11 welfare may be jeopardized through physical abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse; and to protect
10.12 adults who, because of physical or mental disability or dependency on institutional services,
10.13 are particularly vulnerable to maltreatment. Because animal cruelty is linked to human
10.14 violence, it is critical and appropriate to report known or suspected animal cruelty to the
10.15 authorities responsible for protecting children and vulnerable adults.

10.16 Subd. 2. **Mandated reporting; child abuse; vulnerable adults.** Any employee of or
10.17 any person commissioned by the Office of Animal Protection who, in the course of
10.18 deployment, has reasonable cause to suspect that a child or adult is being or has been
10.19 maltreated must provide a report to the Department of Human Services with notification to
10.20 the Office of Animal Protection. If the health and welfare of a child or adult is in immediate
10.21 danger or the child or adult may be abandoned, local law enforcement must be contacted
10.22 immediately if not already on the scene or involved with the assessment and investigation.

10.23 Subd. 3. **Mandated reporting; animal cruelty.** Any child protection or adult protection
10.24 services employee who knows of or has reasonable cause to suspect that an animal has been
10.25 or is being harmed, neglected, or cruelly treated in violation of chapter 343 must notify the
10.26 employee's supervising agency and the Department of Human Services. If the health and
10.27 welfare of an animal is in immediate danger, the reporter must immediately notify the
10.28 appropriate law enforcement agency or the Office of Animal Protection.

10.29 Subd. 4. **Criteria.** Criteria and recommendations for cross reporting, including oral and
10.30 written reports, matters of confidentiality, and training under subdivisions 2, 3, and 5 must
10.31 be defined by the office in consultation with the Department of Human Services.

11.1 Subd. 5. **Immunity.** A reporter under subdivisions 2 and 3 is immune from any civil or
11.2 criminal liability that otherwise might result from the reporter's actions, if the reporter is
11.3 acting in good faith.

11.4 Sec. 10. **[299P.10] COURTROOM ANIMAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM.**

11.5 Subdivision 1. **Court order.** In any prosecution under chapter 343, any court proceeding
11.6 pursuant to chapter 343, or any other criminal proceeding regarding the welfare, care, or
11.7 custody of an animal, the court may appoint, upon the court's initiative or upon request of
11.8 a party, an advocate to represent the interests of the animal.

11.9 Subd. 2. **Advocate; appointment, removal.** When a court appoints an advocate to
11.10 represent the interests of an animal, the court may appoint the advocate from the list
11.11 maintained under subdivision 4. The court may remove the advocate at any stage of the
11.12 proceedings. The decision by a court to appoint an advocate to represent the interests of an
11.13 animal may be made at any stage of the proceedings.

11.14 Subd. 3. **Advocate; duties and authority.** (a) An advocate appointed under this section
11.15 must monitor the case; have access to relevant files, documents, and reports related to the
11.16 case; share with attorneys for the state and defendant any new information relevant to the
11.17 case or prepared by the advocate for presentation to the court or either party; and present
11.18 information and recommendations to the court in the best interests of the animal. The
11.19 advocate's information and recommendations to the court may be based upon the knowledge
11.20 and experience of the advocate or another specialist with knowledge and experience related
11.21 to the type of the animal involved in the case.

11.22 (b) An advocate may consult any individual with information that could aid the judge
11.23 or fact finder; review records relating to the animal's condition and the defendant's actions,
11.24 including but not limited to records from animal control officers, veterinarians, and police
11.25 officers; attend hearings in person, virtually, or by telephone; and, if appropriate, provide
11.26 a victim impact statement to the court.

11.27 Subd. 4. **Advocate requirements.** The office shall maintain a list of attorneys who have
11.28 indicated a willingness to serve as advocates under this section on a voluntary basis and are
11.29 eligible to serve as advocates. In order to be eligible to serve as an advocate, an attorney
11.30 must have completed training as required by the office. A qualified attorney may supervise
11.31 one or more certified student attorneys.

11.32 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective August 1, 2023, and applies to crimes
11.33 committed on or after that date.

12.1 **Sec. 11. [299P.11] SUPPORT SERVICES; TRAINING, DATA; RESOURCES.**

12.2 **Subdivision 1. Training and auditing.** (a) The director shall develop, administer, and
12.3 maintain cross-discipline training for and auditing of office personnel and criminal justice
12.4 partners in the investigation and prosecution of animal cruelty cases. The training must
12.5 reflect the variety of animal cruelty crimes and investigative and prosecutorial techniques
12.6 under state law. Cruelty against all animals must be included.

12.7 (b) The director may collaborate with local, state, and national subject experts in
12.8 developing training curriculum. The director may establish minimum qualifications for
12.9 training course instructors and hire the instructors necessary to provide the best possible
12.10 instruction, subject to the limitation of funding appropriated and available for expenditure.

12.11 (c) The director may charge tuition to cover the cost of continuing education courses
12.12 provided by the office when money available to the director for this purpose is not adequate
12.13 to pay these costs. The tuition fees collected are appropriated to the director.

12.14 **Subd. 2. Data and information; records.** The director must streamline the collection,
12.15 analysis, and use of data related to animal cruelty crimes, including case intake, the office's
12.16 response, charges filed, and final disposition of all complaints reported and cases investigated,
12.17 in collaboration with the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and other criminal justice
12.18 partners.

12.19 **Subd. 3. Facilities and resources provided.** The director and other personnel of the
12.20 office must be provided with appropriate facilities and resources in the same manner as
12.21 provided for personnel of other state agencies. The director must determine, purchase, and
12.22 maintain equipment, supplies, and resources required to execute the office's duties under
12.23 this chapter.

12.24 **Subd. 4. Emergency or natural disaster response.** In the case of an emergency or
12.25 natural disaster, the office may collaborate with the Department of Public Safety and other
12.26 qualified entities to assist with the care, removal, and housing of animals. Agreements must
12.27 be established prior to deployment.

12.28 **Subd. 5. Forensic science services; laboratories.** The director must provide resources
12.29 for forensic science services to assist local, state, Tribal, and federal agencies in the
12.30 investigation and prosecution of animal cruelty crimes. The office must support the necropsy
12.31 section of the Veterinary Diagnostic Lab at the University of Minnesota related to animal
12.32 cruelty cases, including financial assistance for a forensic veterinary pathologist. The office
12.33 must collaborate with local and national laboratories that specialize in investigating crimes
12.34 of cruelty against animals.

13.1 Subd. 6. **Victim services.** The office must work collaboratively with the Office of Justice
13.2 Programs, victim advocates, and others in the field of victim services to assist people who
13.3 own and care for animals and have suffered physical, emotional, legal, or financial trauma
13.4 due to animal cruelty and provide support to people in multiple languages.

13.5 Subd. 7. **Other programs.** The director may develop additional programs, services, or
13.6 resources as needed to fulfill the office's duties and prevent future animal cruelty offenses,
13.7 including but not limited to developing treatment models for animal abusers, intervention
13.8 models for juvenile offenders of animal cruelty, and pet sheltering programs for victims of
13.9 domestic violence.

13.10 Sec. 12. **[299P.12] ANIMAL CRUELTY REPORTING; COMMUNICATIONS;**
13.11 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.**

13.12 Subdivision 1. **State answering point system.** The director must establish and maintain
13.13 a single state answering point system for use by the public or persons responsible for
13.14 reporting known or suspected animal cruelty; dispatching of complaints to the appropriate
13.15 authority and jurisdiction; and response to local, state, Tribal, and federal offices,
13.16 departments, or agencies requesting state assistance during and following an incident of
13.17 animal cruelty.

13.18 Subd. 2. **Communication services.** (a) The director, in consultation with the
13.19 commissioner of public safety, must convene a telecommunications working group to
13.20 provide recommendations for establishing a state answering point system. The director must
13.21 convene the first meeting, set an expiration date for the working group, and provide
13.22 administrative support.

13.23 (b) The working group must consider establishing a 24-hour animal cruelty hotline to
13.24 respond to cruelty complaints throughout the state and requests for assistance. Any contact
13.25 number must be integrated with technology used in other state crisis and emergency response
13.26 systems.

13.27 (c) To increase proficiency in receiving and responding to calls and tracking and
13.28 maintaining data, the working group must also consider the following: criteria for intake
13.29 forms, standards, and training for telecommunicators; a mobile radio system for response
13.30 teams; and funding options.

13.31 Subd. 3. **Community engagement; intervention and prevention.** The director must
13.32 work with community members to develop strategies to address animal cruelty and promote
13.33 intervention and prevention measures. The office's efforts may include developing public

14.1 awareness campaigns that identify animal care resources and mental health support; empower
 14.2 various professions to recognize and respond to early signs of animal cruelty; and assess
 14.3 factors, including family dysfunction, that may contribute to cruelty to animals. The director
 14.4 may establish a working group to create recommendations.

14.5 Sec. 13. **[299P.13] AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS; LOCAL AUTHORITY.**

14.6 Subdivision 1. **Agreements and contracts.** The director may enter into contracts with
 14.7 parties to assist with fulfilling the duties under this chapter.

14.8 Subd. 2. **Authority of local governing bodies.** This chapter must not be construed to
 14.9 limit or preempt additional requirements by any city, town, or city and county.

14.10 Sec. 14. **[299P.14] ANIMAL PROTECTION ACCOUNT; GRANTS; SPECIAL**
 14.11 **REVENUES.**

14.12 Subdivision 1. **Animal protection account.** An animal protection account is created in
 14.13 the special revenue fund. All fees and penalties collected by the office under this chapter
 14.14 or any money received by the office as gifts, grants, or other private or public money obtained
 14.15 for the purposes of this chapter must be deposited in the animal protection account. Money
 14.16 in the account, including interest on the account, is annually appropriated to the director to
 14.17 administer this chapter.

14.18 Subd. 2. **Money received from other sources.** The director may accept and use money
 14.19 received as gifts, grants, or contributions from any source to support the purposes of the
 14.20 office. The director may apply for and accept grants of money from the federal government,
 14.21 the state, any foundation, or any person to support the purposes of the office.

14.22 Subd. 3. **Grants authorized.** The commissioner of public safety may make grants to
 14.23 state and local units of government to combat animal cruelty, including but not limited to
 14.24 crime prevention measures.

14.25 Subd. 4. **Cost of care reimbursement.** Local units of government that incur costs related
 14.26 to the care of animals seized pursuant to chapter 343 may apply to the commissioner of
 14.27 public safety for reimbursement. The commissioner must adopt rules under this section
 14.28 regarding:

14.29 (1) the administration and disbursement of the money available for reimbursement under
 14.30 this subdivision, including guidelines to ensure that multiple applicants have equitable
 14.31 access to reimbursement;

15.1 (2) the application process by an eligible applicant for financial assistance to cover the
 15.2 cost of emergency veterinary treatment, care, housing, or transport of an animal, including
 15.3 the response time to reimburse an applicant; and

15.4 (3) the cost of reasonable and necessary care of an animal and limits, if any, on the
 15.5 amount of payment to each applicant.

15.6 Subd. 5. **Animal protection tax checkoff.** (a) An individual who files an income tax
 15.7 return or property tax refund claim form may designate on the individual's original return
 15.8 that \$1 or more must be added to the tax or deducted from the refund that would otherwise
 15.9 be payable by or to the individual and paid into an account established for the Office of
 15.10 Animal Protection.

15.11 (b) The commissioner of revenue shall, on the income tax return and the property tax
 15.12 refund claim form, notify a filer of the filer's right to pay a portion of the filer's tax or refund
 15.13 into the animal protection account. The sum of the money that a filer pays into the account
 15.14 must be credited to the animal protection account for use by the Office of Animal Protection.
 15.15 All interest earned on money received, gifts to the office, contributions to the office, and
 15.16 reimbursements of expenditures in the animal protection account must be credited to the
 15.17 animal protection account by the commissioner of management and budget, except that
 15.18 gifts or contributions received directly by the commissioner of public safety and directed
 15.19 by the contributor for use in specific animal protection projects or geographic areas must
 15.20 be handled according to section 16A.013.

15.21 Sec. 15. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 624.712, subdivision 5, is amended to read:

15.22 Subd. 5. **Crime of violence.** "Crime of violence" means: felony convictions of the
 15.23 following offenses: sections 609.185 (murder in the first degree); 609.19 (murder in the
 15.24 second degree); 609.195 (murder in the third degree); 609.20 (manslaughter in the first
 15.25 degree); 609.205 (manslaughter in the second degree); 609.215 (aiding suicide and aiding
 15.26 attempted suicide); 609.221 (assault in the first degree); 609.222 (assault in the second
 15.27 degree); 609.223 (assault in the third degree); 609.2231 (assault in the fourth degree);
 15.28 609.224 (assault in the fifth degree); 609.2242 (domestic assault); 609.2247 (domestic
 15.29 assault by strangulation); 609.229 (crimes committed for the benefit of a gang); 609.235
 15.30 (use of drugs to injure or facilitate crime); 609.24 (simple robbery); 609.245 (aggravated
 15.31 robbery); 609.25 (kidnapping); 609.255 (false imprisonment); 609.322 (solicitation,
 15.32 inducement, and promotion of prostitution; sex trafficking); 609.342 (criminal sexual conduct
 15.33 in the first degree); 609.343 (criminal sexual conduct in the second degree); 609.344 (criminal
 15.34 sexual conduct in the third degree); 609.345 (criminal sexual conduct in the fourth degree);

16.1 609.377 (malicious punishment of a child); 609.378 (neglect or endangerment of a child);
16.2 609.486 (commission of crime while wearing or possessing a bullet-resistant vest); 609.52
16.3 (involving theft of a firearm and theft involving the theft of a controlled substance, an
16.4 explosive, or an incendiary device); 609.561 (arson in the first degree); 609.562 (arson in
16.5 the second degree); 609.582, subdivision 1 or 2 (burglary in the first and second degrees);
16.6 609.66, subdivision 1e (drive-by shooting); 609.67 (unlawfully owning, possessing, operating
16.7 a machine gun or short-barreled shotgun); 609.71 (riot); 609.713 (terroristic threats); 609.749
16.8 (harassment); 609.855, subdivision 5 (shooting at a public transit vehicle or facility); ~~and~~
16.9 chapter 152 (drugs, controlled substances); and chapter 343 (animal cruelty); and an attempt
16.10 to commit any of these offenses.

16.11 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective August 1, 2023, and applies to crimes
16.12 committed on or after that date.

16.13 **Sec. 16. OFFICE OF ANIMAL PROTECTION; APPROPRIATION.**

16.14 \$..... in fiscal year 2024 and \$..... in fiscal year 2025 are appropriated from the general
16.15 fund to the commissioner of public safety to establish and operate the Office of Animal
16.16 Protection.