

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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OFFICE OF  
THE GOVERNOR

NO. \_\_\_\_\_ 2018-003 \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE January 29, 2018 \_\_\_\_\_

**AN ORDER ESTABLISHING THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW MAINE  
ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATIONS**

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of the Animal Welfare Program in the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry is to ensure humane and proper treatment of animals by developing, implementing and administering a comprehensive program that upholds the animal welfare laws of Maine through communication, education and enforcement; and

**WHEREAS**, the work of enforcing Maine's animal welfare laws is difficult, requires a high level of cooperation with many local and regional law enforcement and animal protection entities and by its nature entails interest from concerned parties; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Animal Welfare staff continues to be responsible for numerous, complex animal neglect and abuse cases including high-profile animal seizures throughout Maine; and

**WHEREAS**, the increasing volume and number of animal abuse investigations strains local, county and state human and financial resources; and

**WHEREAS**, there is an ongoing need to improve cooperation and strengthen partnerships between the Animal Welfare Program and all levels of law enforcement including District Attorneys; and

**WHEREAS**, the Maine Animal Welfare Advisory Council, as established by Title 5, section 12004-1, subsection 2-C currently exists to advise the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry regarding the implementation and enforcement of Maine's animal welfare laws, but not pertaining to administration of the Program;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, Paul R. LePage, Governor of the State of Maine**, do hereby establish the **Committee to Review Maine Animal Cruelty Investigations** ("the Committee") for the purposes of: (1) reviewing the laws, rules, regulations and procedures followed by the Maine Animal Welfare Program, (2) looking for any systemic issues that can or should be addressed in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's administration of animal protection programs, (3) ascertaining the effectiveness of existing resources and (4) developing recommendations on how the DACF administration of the Maine Animal Welfare Program can be strengthened and improved.

## THE COMMITTEE

Membership of the Committee and its chair, shall be selected by the Governor and consist of nine (9) members. The Committee's composition shall include:

- Two (2) representatives from the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, to include staff support for the committee
- One (1) Assistant District Attorney or District Attorney
- Two (2) veterinarians with cumulative experience in large animal, small animal, livestock, domestic animal and equines
- One (1) local Animal Control Officer
- One (1) representative of the Maine State Police
- One (1) member involved with animal sheltering
- One (1) member of the Animal Welfare Advisory Council

## DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee shall:

- Establish goals and timeframes for the Committee's work
- Review Animal Welfare Program policies and procedures with respect to investigations and animal seizures
- Review the Program to determine how state and community staff resources are allocated and how the allocation impacts the efficiency of program delivery
- Consult with public-sector and private-sector experts
- Evaluate the level of cooperation of all responsible parties with the Animal Welfare Program
- Make recommendations to the Governor as appropriate

The Committee shall deliver a report to the Governor summarizing its fact-finding review by August 31, 2018.

The effective date of this Executive Order is January 29, 2018.

  
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Paul R. LePage, Governor