

February 21, 2024

Esteemed Chairs Kavros Degraw and Rahman,  
Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

The Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG) appreciates the opportunity to comment on Raised Bill 6998, *An Act Requiring the Licensing of Dogs Every Three Years*. This bill would extend the dog licensing period from one year to three years. WestCOG supports measures that enhance efficiency and reduce administrative burdens while ensuring compliance with important public health regulations.

The proposed extension of the licensing period aligns with past state efforts to streamline administrative processes. Connecticut has extended the renewal periods for driver's licenses and motor vehicle registrations to reduce transaction volume and improve convenience for residents. A similar approach to dog licensing would benefit municipal clerks by reducing the frequency of processing renewals while also improving convenience for dog owners.

Furthermore, an opportunity exists to modernize the dog licensing process by leveraging existing infrastructure, similar to how vehicle registrations are handled. In Connecticut, auto dealerships can register vehicles and issue license plates at the point of sale, reducing the need for residents to visit the Department of Motor Vehicles. A comparable model could apply to dogs by authorizing veterinary offices to issue dog licenses at the time of rabies vaccination. Since rabies vaccinations are a prerequisite for dog licensing, allowing veterinarians to provide licenses directly would streamline compliance, increase licensing rates, and reduce the burden on municipal offices.

To implement such a system effectively, the following considerations should be addressed:

- **Technology Integration:** Establish a secure digital system that allows veterinarians to issue and report licenses to municipal databases.
- **Training and Authorization:** Ensure veterinarians and their staff are adequately trained to process licenses accurately and in compliance with state regulations.
- **Revenue Sharing:** Develop a fair and transparent revenue arrangement to cover administrative costs. A convenience fee may be an option here.
- **Public Awareness:** Inform dog owners of the new licensing options to encourage participation and compliance.

WestCOG encourages the Committee to consider including a provision in Bill 6998 to study or pilot a veterinarian-based licensing system. Such an initiative could enhance the effectiveness of dog licensing in Connecticut while maintaining public health and administrative efficiency.

Should you have questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Francis Pickering". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Francis R. Pickering  
Executive Director